

NATIONAL OBSERVANCES

Navy Chaplains are frequently invited to offer prayers of invocation and benediction for various nationally observed occasions or events. The following are examples of prayers from military chaplains.



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ARMED FORCES DAY

Who are we, Lord. . . ? Why are we here . . . ?

We are American fighting men . . . we stand vigil over the free world. We are held together by a common bond. . . our love of life and liberty for ourselves and our loved ones . . . and our right to worship You without fear of oppression. Whatever is said about us and our ship, when the chips are down, we pull together. It is this that makes us a team set apart . . . we are a floating fortress of men and machines, striving to make the world a better place. Keep us aware of our heritage. Amen.**

O God and Father of us all, we gather on this special day to bear solemn testimony before Thee and to the citizens of this great nation of ours, for loving gratitude and respect for all of our servicemen and women in uniform today. Grant, we beseech Thee, Lord, that the liberty and freedom we count so dear, might remain with us always, and that those who are still in bondage by tyrants, might someday have the same privileges we do. We especially pray today, heavenly Father, for safety, guidance, and protection for all our service members. Comfort and sustain their families who often have to sustain the pain of long separation. Keep, O Lord, our nation at peace. But should our enemies dare to test our strength, may they find us invincible because our trust is in Thee, in whose name we make these petitions. Amen.

Our Father, we thank You for Your providential hand in history and especially for the successful pages in American military history. We are proud to be Americans and to stand our watch in uniform over values that are worth defending. May our pride never become arrogance, and our strength never be found in weapons alone. Amen.

Our Lord of hosts, in whom our fathers and mothers trusted; we give thanks for all men and women, citizens of the United States of America, who have, and are, serving in the Armed Forces of our land. In time of peace, each stands as a promise of peace; in times of disaster or conflict, each stands as our nation's willingness to support and defend the freedoms we so highly value. May our tribute to each of these citizens and service members imitate our support to all nations whose love is for peace. God, support our Commander-in-Chief and military leaders so that our sacred trusts in our Armed Forces be echoed "In God We

Almighty and ever-blessed God, on this Armed Forces Day, we dedicate anew our military power for the cause of peace both at home and abroad. Accept our humble thanks for the opportunities that abide in our land, for Your guidance in hours of peril and for Your tender love in times of need. We pray today for Your blessing upon all the men and women of the Armed Forces who stand ready and willing to serve and defend our country. Grant them steadfastness of heart; inspire them in the cause of peace; guide their endeavors as they remain loyal to our country and faithful to You. Rekindle in all America a spirit of sacrifice and a steadfastness of

purpose. Empower us with the intellect to comprehend, with the compassion to be concerned, with the dedication to achieve, and with the faith and fortitude to follow each task through, so that all our labors support peace and freedom for all humanity. Hear us as we pray for this nation and all nations that you will hasten the fulfillment of your promise of peace that shall have no end, now and ever more. Amen.

Almighty and ever-blessed God, as we begin Armed Forces Week, we come to You with grateful and humble hearts. For over 200 years You have blessed our nation with dedicated and selfless men and women in uniform always prepared to defend our nation's freedoms. The peace and security that is ours today is a direct result of the continued contributions and sacrifices made each day by men and women in uniform in the line of duty. We pay tribute to them, Lord, and ask You to protect them as they proudly serve their country all over the world. Amen.

Dear Lord, tonight we have so many things for which to be thankful. As a nation we have been granted many freedoms that are not available to people of other countries. We have freedom of speech, and most important, the freedom to worship You, O Lord. Tonight we are assembled to recognize the members of our Armed Forces who strive to ensure that our country remains strong and free. We ask that You bless all service members stationed throughout the world. Remember those who have given their lives for their country. We ask a special blessing for the President of the United States, and thank You for the strength and guidance that You have provided him. Lord, we ask that You also bless the families of our service members and continue to watch over them during times of hardship and separation. We ask this in Your name. Amen.

Especially today we would pray for those who wear our country's uniform in areas of danger, and for those who prepare to go to such places. For all, in every place, who devote years of their lives to the safeguarding of liberty and justice for all, we pray. We pray for our president and his advisors, for the United Nations, for those leaders of countries who we call our enemies, that their hearts and minds may earnestly desire and strive for peace among the nations. And we pray for ourselves, that we may be peace-makers in our own small way, seeking more to build up than to tear down, more to praise the good than to condemn the bad, more to do honest work than to complain. We are but children who need Your love and correction, Your strength and Your instruction. Make our lives strong, Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ and his witness in the world. Amen.

May the Lord God of Hosts be mighty in his blessings of us and to our country. May He challenge our minds with memories of the valiant patriots who have gone before us. May He inspire our wills with steadfast courage to follow the good paths where they have led. And may He strengthen our hearts with determination that we never falter in the honored service of our country and in faithful worship of our God. Amen.

Lord God of Hosts, whose powers are from everlasting to everlasting and whose name is above every name in heaven and earth: keep, we pray Thee, under Thy protecting care, the Armed Forces of our country and all who serve therein. Defend them amid violence on land or sea or in the heavens, and grant that they may be a sure defense and safeguard for the peoples of the United States; a security for such as come and go in peaceful and lawful pursuit. In time of peace keep them from evil. In the day of conflict, suffer not their courage to fail; that they may guard the American heritage against those who would destroy the liberties of government by the people and to the end that the blessings of religion and law may be preserved to posterity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Heavenly Father, I commend to thy gracious care and keeping all the men and women in our Armed Forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with Thy heavenly grace. Strengthen them in their trials and temptations. Give them courage to face the perils that beset them and help them to know that no one can pluck out of Thy hand those who put their trust in Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, to whom we give our highest praise, look with mercy, we beseech Thee, upon all who wear the uniform of our Armed Forces, and upon all people of the free world. As all people are called to a task, and we are called to this task of continually winning and keeping our nation's freedom, may we accept this mission gladly, and perform our tasks admirably. But, O God, as we display the power and might of a warrior, may we never forget that the ultimate might and power rests in Thy hands. And even as we arm ourselves with weapons, may we also arm ourselves with Thy truth and righteousness, that true victory may surely be ours. In the name of our Master. Amen.

Almighty God, we thank You for this opportunity to come together this afternoon. You have given each of us a need for support in our lives and a need to be assured that what we are doing is appreciated. We are especially grateful to those who have concern for the men and women in our military and want to express their concern by attending this luncheon. We ask You to bless them with continued health of mind and body, and reward them for their efforts. We in the military are thankful for this occasion and ask that You deepen our appreciation for all who support us. Help us to show our gratitude by a sincere willingness to make whatever sacrifices necessary to do our part in preserving the gifts You have given each of us and our country. Accept this occasion as our way of saying we are Your people, united in keeping Your peace and spreading Your kingdom. Bless this food we are about to receive and our efforts to serve You. Amen.

Eternal Father, we are gathered here to remember the selfless service of those who are honored today. I pray that You will bless them in their new endeavors. Give them the strong sense of Your presence and leading in their futures. May their example spur us on to greater accomplishments. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

Eternal and ever blessed God, who has been our helper in times past, continue to be our help in these days. On this Armed Forces Day we offer to You our praise and thanksgiving for the blessings of the past, the challenge of the present, and the hope of the future. Make us ever mindful of the sacred trust we have received from our fathers. Instill in our hearts a deeper sense of righteousness and justice. Enable us to rededicate ourselves to the heritage and principles that have made our nation great. Keep us ever alert and ready to seize the opportunities of today and give us the ability to take a hard look at the future and a willingness to accept the challenge of tomorrow. We pray for the men and women who constitute the fabric of our military strength. We would especially remember those who are exposed to danger and peril in the defense of our nation, those who are prisoners of war or missing in action, and for their families, who wait in loneliness and sadness of heart. Be near to each one of them and give them a sense of comfort of Your presence. Finally, we pray for Your Fatherly benediction as we join with those around the world who work toward the end that righteousness and peace shall prevail among all the nations of the world. Amen.

O God, we pause to acknowledge You as the Lord and giver of life. We thank You for all Your blessings upon us. Be with those who serve in the armed forces today, especially our leaders. Endow them with courage and conviction. Add wisdom to their knowledge, and flavor their ambition with a sense of service. Do not allow us to be victorious without first being right; may we not have greatness without goodness. May our motivation for might be our love of peace; peace in our world, among all people, within ourselves, and most of all we pray for peace with Thee. We ask You not for tasks more suited for our strength, but strength more suited to our tasks. Give us a positive faith that we may see in every difficulty an opportunity, in every blessing a responsibility, and in every protection a purpose. Amen.

Almighty God, we thank You for your many blessings upon our great nation. You have given us a bountiful land in which to live. Your hand has ever been upon us to sustain us in adversity and to guide us in prosperity. We thank You for the gift of dedicated people who have served in the armed forces of our country; for each person in every level of responsibility who has loved and defended our nation, who has helped to pass on to us the blessings of freedom and peace. You have given our nation great strength and wealth. We humbly pray for great wisdom to use aright the mighty forces at our disposal for the defense of that freedom and the preservation of peace in our world. Help us always to trust in Thee, to honor and to value highly the qualities of faith, character, and moral integrity that provide the ultimate source of our strength. Provide all those who serve today in the armed forces a full measure of Your care and protection. You, O Lord, are our strength and shield. We thank You for the food we will enjoy tonight and all the sustenance You have provided. Bless us with Your abiding presence now and forever. In Thy name we ask it. Amen.

O Lord, grant us freedom with discipline, motivation with understanding, and determination with compassion. O Lord, give us the will for self-preservation, and the strength and power to

help those who are willing to help themselves. O Lord, give us insight and patience, wisdom along with a sense of duty, and ability coupled with restraint to adjust to the changes in nature and men. O Lord, show us Your ways, and never deliver us into the hands of any enemy. Bless us with Your heavenly and earthly bounties, and never let us be in want. Guide us in being friendly and generous toward one another. Instill in us faith and knowledge, and let all of us have the ability to live at peace within ourselves. O Lord show the people of our nation the right way to serve and guard the sacredness of all orderly freedoms. Let us realize that You have given us riches not given to any other nation under the sun, let us be ever grateful, and accept the responsibilities which they entail. You are our God, and to You we would ascribe glory and honor, now and forever. Amen.

Our gracious God, we pause in grateful thanks for all that You have given us as a nation and a people--for this association of these men and women who are engaged in a most honorable profession that counts duty more than cost--honor more than sacrifice. Rekindle in us and good people everywhere the spirit and commitment to carry high the banner of freedom, and give us clarity of vision that would recognize peace at any price is not peace at all--that life is not without risk nor freedom without sacrifice. Continue to bless our good land, our president and our military leaders. Give us the strength and courage to stand against evil for that which is right and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other. Bless us all now as we gather here in one mind and spirit to enjoy these good gifts of food that flow from the bounty of your hand." Amen.

There is always a marine who lies in the field--and once he defended his country. There are those who have worn the military uniform, and still carry in their hearts the spirit of patriotism. There are those who stand tall to salute their flag. And their hearts beat with glory and greatness. There are those who are always ready to carry arms to defend their country. And there are many people who would stand to greet them when they pass by. We are proud of those who have stood with courage to protect liberty, justice and equal opportunity for all. There are many who are proud to see their country great among all nations. The greatness of a nation and people are gifts of the Lord to those who know him. The Lord brings his people out of war in victory to live in love, honor and peace. Let us honor all service members with respect and appreciation, and be proud before all nations. Amen.

EARTH DAY

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| 1) Lord, on this day, we come to pray
You bless our earthly home.
Teach us to care about our air
Help us to learn, we can't re-earn | For if we don't, our children won't
And keep our land pristine; |
| 2) Teach us to clean our brooks and streams
Enjoy a world still clean. | 3) Lord, what You made should never fade,
So hear our prayer today:
In Your celestial dome.
What we have thrown away. Amen. |

EVENING PRAYERS

O Lord, it's been a long day -- a successful day, but a long day. We've again completed our appointed task -- that heavy, necessary obligation that is ours -- but at least we've found some time for ourselves, and each other. In a way we were family -- trying as best we could to lighten the emotional load we share. We even succeeded in bringing a touch of class to our normally regimented lives. It was good. I thank You, O God, for a country that allows, even encourages us, to pray, to give thanks, and to share our spiritual needs in public fashion. In such moments the sacrifices of the past make sense and the mystical fellowship of free men continues to gel and take hold. I ask, O God, that the sacrifices we now make, however limited, may add to the tradition evidenced and honored today. So often, O Lord, the love and service to our fellow man we intend is much greater than the love we actually give. Help us, O Lord, by selfless deeds to make up the difference. Give us a good night. Amen.

Father, we come to You in prayer on this Thanksgiving Evening. We thank you, Lord, for the bountiful gifts which we have received, for the blessings of freedom, and support of friends and families, we thank You Lord. Father, You are the One Eternal Creator from whom all blessings do flow. Grant, we beseech You, Your holy presence to everyone. May all creation come to know Your name and give thanks. Amen.

FATHERS DAY

O God our heavenly Father, speak to us this day as we gather to honor our earthly fathers. We thank You for their guidance, firmness, and example. For those of us whose fathers have passed away, we gather to honor their memory. For those fathers who are still with us, may our appreciation increase, and our relationship with them be strengthened. This we pray in Your holy name. Amen.

Heavenly Father, You have promised to restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers."We pray that on this special day, Your reconciling love would be in the hearts of all who are present here today. Give our fathers the wisdom and grace for effective leadership in our homes. May each child see in their father a reflection of You, our heavenly Father. To this end, grant us peace. For Your Name's sake, we pray. Amen.

Our abiding Heavenly Father with Your silent strength You fill us with feelings of joy and wonder. You watch over every move and gesture we make, like a loving father watching his child to grow and develop into the reflection of his own values and dreams. On this special day we set aside to honor fathers throughout our land, instill in us a gratitude of the care we have received and for the poignant memories of special times when our earthly fathers have etched on our spirits a higher meaning of love and devotion. Through their examples we have come to understand and accept Your world and Your ways. They are our teachers, our companions, our

friends. And You, in Your infinite wisdom, give us fathers to bless our lives and encourage our growth in every way. Eternal God and Father, we praise Your life-giving nurturing, Your patience, Your love. And we ask Your blessing on all fathers as they seek Your help and guidance in this awesome task of self-giving. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

O God, give us godly fathers. Stir the hearts of all our fathers that they might seek to be more like the Heavenly Father. Lead them to become men of great faith, strong hope and bedrock integrity. Especially, we pray that You would give them the capacity to receive love and the ability to give love, that they might be more like You, Lord. Amen.

Our Heavenly Father, You call us Your children and provide for us, as even our own fathers have done. We ask that You bless all fathers here and elsewhere as they seek to provide for their families. May You grant them patience and kindness, mercy and grace, and faithfulness and love for the awesome responsibility they bear. Stand beside them and strengthen them, so that they know that they do not stand alone, but are sustained by Your presence. May we seek today to honor our fathers and show them we care for and appreciate them just as we care for and appreciate You as the one who gave us life and created this world with all of its joys and possibilities. Amen.

FLAG DAY

On this special day, O Lord, we praise You for the nation and the flag which flies over our land. As we look to the stars on the blue field, we are mindful of the heavens and Your creation. As we look to the stripes, we remember the rays of Your light and Your truth. May this awareness, light and truth permeate our lives and the way in which we relate. Help us, O God, to pray and to know that this flag represents one nation under God. May Your divine wisdom be manifested in the thoughts of our president and in our legislative, judicial, and military leaders. Bind us as one in strength and in Your love. As our flag has carried the message of human rights and religious freedom throughout the world, may it continue to do so in the days and years to come. This we pray in the holiest of names. Amen.

Father, God in heaven, we give thanks on this day of celebration. We ask Your mercy and blessing on the nation symbolized by these patterns of cloth. May the colors and patterns of this flag seem to always bring to mind the purpose of the nation it represents. May the whiteness of the stripes and stars always be bright for purity and never dim or yellow. May the red of the shed blood never be forgotten. May the blue of the sky and the brightness of the stars always represent the striving of our nation toward higher purposes and heavenly goals. It is only a symbol, Father, but let it today and always be a symbol of freedom. May it always be flown in honor and never in shame. And may we be ever mindful of the constant conflict against freedom that surrounds us and the victory that our flag symbolizes for us in that conflict. Guard our hearts

and spirits and keep us from idolatry, but bless us in our honoring of this piece of cloth and all it represents. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting Father, on this Flag Day, we praise you for preserving the Republic, for defending it from enemies that would destroy it from within and without and for keeping our precious freedoms of religious liberty, and equal justice, and meaningful life. We thank You, O God, for this beautiful banner, which represents a unified nation under your divine care. We are grateful to You for this standard which represents men and women of the armed forces and other organizations who courageously shed their blood in the defense of their country, and those who loyally work and train to maintain the peace. May we ever proudly display our flag as an emblem of our commitment to true peace throughout the universe. For it is in Your name we pray. Amen.

Almighty God, we thank You for the flag that flies today as a great symbol of freedom. Keep this banner flying o'er us as we walk in the way of those who do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Thee. Fashion our desires, our duties, and our deeds in accordance with Thy will that we may labor for a better world. In Thy holy name we pray. Amen.

PRAYER FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH PICNIC

God, creator of the universe and giver of life, thank You for the opportunity to seek after life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Today we are especially grateful for the rich heritage of Hispanic Americans. Thank You for the many gifts and talents of each person gathered here. Grant, O God, that Your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, and especially the hearts of the people of America. Barriers which divided us may crumble, suspicions disappear, hatreds cease that our divisions being healed, we may live and work in true justice and peace. Now for the food that has been prepared, we say *gracias*, and ask Your blessing. In Your name we pray. Amen.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

O Lord, on the eve of Independence Day, we pray that You will make each of us aware of the solemn responsibilities which we face in defending our heritage of freedom. Remind us that without dependence upon You we will surely fail. Enable our President and those in political authority to do their work with wisdom and justice. Continue, O Lord, to be the protector and defender of us all. In Your name we pray. Amen.

God, our Father, on this Independence Day we pause for a few moments to give You thanks for a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the principle that all are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights--life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Life has been extended for rich and poor alike, dread diseases that cut short human life in infancy are being eliminated.

Now we grapple with the killers of our technological age--death on the highways, disorder proliferating from our stressful urban existence, heart attacks, hypertension, cancer, and the awful specter of nuclear holocaust. In the pursuit of life, help us to realize that it isn't how long we live, but how we live long that is important. Amen.**

All peoples enjoy the gift of life, many enjoy the privilege of freedom; some enjoy the quality of courage. Life without freedom is intolerable. Freedom without courage is impossible. Military service has made courage a way of life. The courage of the past is in the hands of history. The courage of the future is in our hands. As we recall those who have fallen, let us rededicate ourselves to the tradition of courage. Give us a deep sense of reverence for life, a passionate desire for our freedom. Continue in us the courage of those who have woven this tradition into the history of our country. Amen.

Lord God Almighty, in whose name the founders of this country won liberty for themselves and for us, and lofted the torch of freedom for nations then unborn: grant that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain our liberties in righteousness and in peace. Amen.**

Lord God Almighty, You have made all the peoples of the earth for Your glory, to serve You in freedom and in peace. Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with Your gracious will. Amen.**

As a nation we were convinced early that we could not endure half slave and half free. No one can tolerate liberty as long as brothers and sisters are in chains or shackled by poverty or ignorance, or a denial of basic rights that enable them to contribute to the good of society. Our most elusive dream has been the pursuit of happiness, for no person can give happiness to another. It is a state which each must find individually. Help us to realize that happiness comes not from pursuit or ingrown indulgence, but from sharing not just what we have, but who we are. Re-create in each of us the dreams of our founding fathers, who by Your grace knew that where there was no dream, there was no destiny. Amen.**

We ask God's blessing on our country and all its citizens. May we who have the privilege of American citizenship always serve the nation worthily and with a good conscience. Encourage everyone to obey the Constitution and the just laws of the State and to give support, respect and obedience to those who represent that law. And thus, may our nation remain the home of the brave and the land of the free." Amen.

O Lord, grant us freedom with discipline, motivation with understanding, and determination with compassion. O Lord, give us the will for self-preservation and the strength and power to help those who are willing to help themselves. O Lord, give us insight and patience, wisdom along with a sense of duty, and ability coupled with restraint to adjust to the changes in nature and persons. O Lord, show us Your ways and never deliver us into the hands of any enemy. Bless us with Your heavenly and earthly bounties and never let us be in want. Guide us in being

friendly and generous toward one another. Instill in us faith and knowledge and let all of us have the ability to live at peace within ourselves. O Lord, show the people of our nation the right way to serve and guard the sacredness of all orderly freedoms. Let us realize that You have given us riches not given to any other nation under the sun. Let us be ever grateful and accept the responsibilities which they entail. You are our God and to You we would ascribe glory and honor, now and forever. Amen.

We thank You, God for all that is good, beautiful, and delightful in our lives. We thank You for the marvels of the universe and the blessings bestowed on our country. We thank You for our big and little problems that help to keep us humble and human. Inspire us to share with open hands the many blessing and gifts that You have given to us. May we manifest our gratitude, not only with our lives, but by living lives of goodness and generosity. Praise be to God. Amen.

O God, who has offered freedom to all, we give praise and thanks for this day which celebrates the bringing of freedom to some. In our celebrations this day; in our joyful remembering of the events that led to independence; help us to recall that we are never fully independent until we surrender in dependence to You and Your will. We rest, as our liberty does, on the actions of others who have gone before. These Forefathers' pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honors for the sake of liberty. Strengthen us, so we may do no less. Amen.

Lord of the nations, You have blessed our land with the spirit of love and freedom. You have also blessed our ancestors with the will and strength to seek out and maintain that freedom, for which we thank You. Keep that will and strength alive in us today, that we may continue to strive for true freedom for all people. Let us never fall into complacency simply because we have what we need, but help us always to remember that until all are well fed, until no one is homeless, until none live in fear, not one of us is absolutely free. Our prayer today is that you, O God, would keep us firmly on the path that works toward such true freedom for all. Continue to bless our nation and all nations. Hear our prayer. Amen.

God of our weary and silent tears, You have brought us this far on our way. We give You thanks for life, health and strength. We thank You for giving us this land and our heritage. Forgive us for the times we've thought only of ourselves and transgressed against ourselves, neighbors and You. Have mercy upon us. Bless the leadership of our nation at every level. Grant them the wisdom and courage to move our nation in a manner that will result in a productive economy, sound learning and a sensitive response to the needs of the populace. Grant us the wisdom and courage to always prove ourselves a people mindful of Your favor and glad to do your will. Help us to rise above the human tendencies that oppress us and encourage oppression of others. Empower us to truly become "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." In Your name we pray. Amen.

O Lord God, our Father, we are grateful for the abundance You have provided our land so that we could become a great nation. Lord, help us to realize that all You have given us is but a trust to be shared. Father, grant us the unselfishness and ingenuity to make Your abundance available to all people everywhere. As we face these exciting days as a nation, grant us the vision to see Your will and the courage to attempt it. May the faith and service and love that strengthened our forefathers so inspire us, that we may serve the needs of our day without counting the cost, even as they did not count the cost in theirs. O, Lord, our prayer for our nation is that You will give us faith for today and hope for tomorrow. Amen.

Almighty and eternal God, we give Thee thanks for this nation's freedom and for those individuals throughout history who have lived and died for our independence. We bless Thee for the many opportunities this nation provides and for the pride we share in our accomplishments over the centuries. Grant that we may be faithful citizens always mindful of Thy Lordship. This prayer we offer in Thy holy name. Amen.

O Lord God, Almighty Creator, accept our praise today. For generation after generation You have shown forth Your almighty power. Your blessings have been ours from our very beginning as a nation. We thank You for the freedom that was won over 200 years ago. Help us to appreciate that freedom as we celebrate it today. We pray for those nations whose people are oppressed. Where they thirst for freedom, Lord, may their thirst be quenched. Where they hunger for peace, Lord, may their hunger be satisfied. We remember today how we have grown from thirteen states to fifty. We thank You that liberty is enjoyed, tyranny is abhorred, justice is practiced, and hate is being conquered. Help us to remember what You have commanded: that we should 'act justly, love mercifully and walk humbly with our God.' May we show forth those characteristics as a nation for the next 200 years. Help us, O Lord, to trust in You, to remember the lessons of our past, to be resourceful with the prospects of the future. Let freedom ring in our lives, our nation, and our world. Amen.

All men and women enjoy the gift of life; many enjoy the privilege of freedom; some enjoy the quality of courage. Life without freedom is intolerable. Freedom without courage is impossible. The Sea Services have made courage a way of life. The courage of the past is in the hands of history. The courage of the future is in our hands. As we recall those who have fallen, let us rededicate ourselves to the tradition of courage. Give us a deep sense of reverence for life, and a passionate desire for freedom. Continue in us the courage of those who have woven this tradition into the history of our country. Amen.**

LABOR DAY

Lord, we never seem to have enough time. We rush and rush from one activity to the next . . . one experience after another. There never seems to be enough time . . . time to finish . . . time to be with . . . time to listen, or time to write. Time is a perishable gift--the hours are too short . . .

the days are too short . . . our lives are too short. Tonight, Lord, I ask not that You give us more time . . . or time to do this or do that . . . but the wisdom to do well whatever You want of us in the time You have given us. Amen.

Lord, the only things that last and stand the test of time are the things I have come to know by my own efforts . . . by personal intimate contact with sweat and hard work, and pain and effort and people . . . these I cherish. Bless them, Lord; they are now part of me. Amen.

Lord, You created with Your hands and with Your mind--and then You rested. In Your leisure, You looked with love on Your work--and You were happy. It was good. We have made our world into a place where work doesn't always produce good--and where those who relax don't always sleep well. So Lord, help us to follow Your example even more closely--to work hard and creatively at projects we can enthusiastically support, and then to feel good about resting, confident that we deserve our leisure. Amen.

Almighty God, You have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives. Guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good. As we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work. Amen.**

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

Dear Lord, help us to worship You in truth and holiness. In our devotion, give us understanding to know that we are all brothers and sisters, created in Your image to serve You faithfully. And perceiving this insight, may we be willing to share your message of reconciliation with our neighbors. We praise you, O God, for Martin Luther King, Jr, and all Your servants who, having finished their course, challenge us to remain steadfast in our quest for justice, equality and freedom. May Dr King's dream be our dream and may peace prevail among all people of the world. Amen.

Lord, we rejoice that as a nation we have been singularly blessed. On this day of remembrance, we thank You for people with vision. In particular we are grateful for Martin Luther King, Jr, who had a magnificent dream and with courage pursued it. He reminded us that our greatest defense . . . is to take affirmative action on behalf of justice, for a threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Help us, Lord, to be zealous instruments of Your justice and to follow Martin Luther King's example by working for peace among all people. Bless our efforts to serve You by helping us to live in harmony as Your children. Amen.

Almighty God, we thank you for the diversity of races and cultures in this world, for it is our differences that enrich life and make it exciting. Bless us through ever-widening circles of fellowship and increase our knowledge of You that our love for others might grow. In the words

of St Francis, Lord, make us instruments of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is discord, union . . . Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand.”Help us to mature in Your grace so that we will be more loving and understanding of one another. This we pray in the name of our Lord. Amen.

Gracious Father, today we honor Martin Luther King, Jr, whom You brought to a holy mountain, to whom You gave a vision, and who gave his life in proclaiming Your word. You told us through him that we must love the oppressor as well as the oppressed; that if we claim to love even one person, we must love all; that to love one another unto death is the way of holiness. Inspire us all by his example that we too may ascend the mountain. We too may see a vision; that we too may be your faithful servants and help bring about the kingdom of the Lord on earth--a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace. May we now be inspired by the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr, and follow his example by reaching out to others. Amen.

O Lord, we assemble here today to remember and honor a great American: a man of vision and hope. May the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr., become the dream of all people, a dream of peace, love and harmony, drawing the nations of the world together in cooperative balance. May his life of courage and pursuit of justice serve to inspire each of us to live more in conformity to Your will. Amen.

Dear Heavenly Father, creator of all humankind, we thank You that You are not a discriminator between races. We thank You that You do not withhold Your sovereign grace from those who, in the eyes of some, may not possess the socially acceptable credentials. We especially thank You today for the courage and faith of one man, Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, who remained faithful to Your principles of justice and righteousness and called our nation back to You. We pray that today our memory of this great man will be more than an epitaph; but a call to all of us to dedicate our energies to the freedom of all people of all races and classes. May we, too, stand against the prejudice and bigotry of those who would build their own self interest on the ashes of the basic human needs of others. May we be a constant reminder to others that all peoples everywhere have been created in Your image and, therefore, are worthy of dignity and respect. To the end that our brothers and sisters throughout this land might always be free. We pray in Your most gracious name. Amen.

Let us pray. Dear Lord the Father of us all, we thank You for the opportunity we have today to celebrate the life and memory of your servant, Martin Luther King, Jr. We thank You for people from every generation who have been willing to live by their principles, not only when it was the popular thing to do, but also when it became unpopular and life threatening. We thank You for the dream that Dr King had, a dream that because of our sinfulness we regret has yet to be fully realized, but thankfully is still in the slow process of fulfillment. We pray that one day the time will come when it will not matter what the color of a person's skin, the language spoken, the place

of birth, the manner or lack of worship, social status or material wealth or poverty, but that we may be able to live together as brothers and sisters. Today help us to inventory our own prejudices and fears, and seek to eliminate those that are improper. Help us to examine our own principles, our own personal values and determine our willingness to hold fast to them. May we consider being dreamers of better times and life styles, not for the sake of noble rousing, but for the sake of humanity. We pray in Your holy name. Amen.

Our Heavenly Father we thank You for the contribution of Dr King and all those who follow in his steps. We thank You for the beauty of their uniqueness, the vitality of their faith, the nobility of their sacrifice, and the inspiration of their accomplishments. We thank Thee for their contribution to the American way of life, their love of freedom, their eternal hope, unfolding dream and their unshakable and undying faith. Help us, God, to be aware of Your presence within all people of faith. Open our hearts to the divine influence; eliminate our prejudice and hardness of heart. Amen.

Our Father in Heaven, You surround our daily life with familiar things and well-know faces. You not only instruct us, but also command us to love others as much as we love ourselves. We pray You will help us to remove all that divides us from one another. Teach us what it means to truly love one another in deed, and not by word alone. Teach us to practice kindness instead of hindrance, love instead of hate, helpfulness instead of destruction. Use us to give life meaning and purpose and hope, instead of trampling down, crushing under and destroying that life. Our Father, we are grateful for the man whose birthday we remember today. Accept our thanks for giving us, even for a little while, Martin Luther King, Jr. Help us to practice what he lived and died for. May the world be a better place because he lived. Through Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Almighty God, we praise You for sending us a man of peace who resisted tyranny, a man of nonviolence who fought for liberty, a man of God who worked for people. Thank You, Lord, for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who inspired us with his dream, who walked into our lives and our hearts with marches for justice, who demanded freedom with great courage in the face of great danger, and who passed on into your promised land. Thank You for his noble legacy. Great God and Father of us all, destroy prejudice that turns us against our brothers and sisters. Teach us that we are all the children of Your love, whether we are black, red, brown, yellow, or white. Encourage us to live together and love one another in peace, as did our brother Martin Luther King, Jr. Change us from the ignorance that nourishes injustice and from the indifference that causes hearts to break. Help us to demonstrate Your love beyond caste and color. We pray for the spirit of love to help us work religiously for peace and true brotherhood. Help us to break away from our selfishness and lead us to freedom. Give us power to make changes, and peace to mend broken spirits. We remember today and we thank You again for Your servant, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Grant that we may not rest until all peoples of this great land share the benefits

of true freedom and gladly accept its disciplines. This we ask in the name of our Heavenly Father. Amen.

Creator God, master and sustainer of all life, today we worship You in our gathering as we honor a great leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. On this holiday we are reminded of marches, boycotts and sit-ins. We are also reminded that many gave their lives so that all people could enjoy the freedoms of this great country. O God our Father, thank You for making this day a reality. Thank You for building within our spiritual and moral fiber a thirst and hunger to confront social injustices and institutional wrongs. We praise You, God, for allowing this day to point towards an even higher tomorrow. We praise You for being in complete control of our past, present and future. And we adore You for allowing us to help make this world a better place for all people everywhere. May we follow the leading of Your Spirit forever. Amen.

Divine Creator, who did fashion man in Your own image and who also made him of one blood with his fellows, on this day we remember the birthday of Your servant, Martin Luther King, Jr. He struggled throughout his life and finally suffered martyrdom in the cause of making brotherhood a reality. We in the military have known and experienced the common humanity of man in times of great stress, danger, need and crisis in our lives. Then, our largely artificial barriers of class, of creed, or color gave way to the divinely implanted impulse to protect and defend each other, to share with our fellows the crust of bread, the cup of water, and the word of reassurance. Hasten the day when elemental brotherhood will be the continuous order of the day rather than seen only in times of catastrophe and disaster. To this end, bless all that is said and done in this Memorial Service today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Almighty God, we acknowledge Your presence during this national celebration of the birthday of Dr Martin Luther King, Jr., for his non-violent approach to love, freedom and justice for all humanity. We ask that You will continue to guide and lead us through Your wisdom and knowledge. Thank You for Your eternal understanding and mercy when we fail in our benevolence toward one another. May we remember the dream of Dr King as we continue to interact with one another in society. Amen.

A day to celebrate the life and dream of Martin Luther King, Jr. A day to reaffirm the American ideals of freedom, justice, and opportunity for all. A day for love not hate, for understanding not anger, for peace not war. A day for the family: to share together, to reach out to relatives and friends, and to mend broken relationships. A day when the community rids itself of the barriers which divide it and comes together as one. A day when people of all races, religions, classes and stations in life put aside their differences and join in the spirit of togetherness. A day for our nation to pay tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr., who awakened in us the best qualities of the American spirit. A day for nations of the world to cease all violent actions, seek non-violent solutions, and demonstrate that peace is not just a dream but a real possibility. If only for a day, if for only one day, each of us serves as a *Drum Major for Justice and Peace*, then we will bring

to life the inspiring vision of freedom which Martin Luther King, Jr. dreamed. And when this happens, and we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up the day when all God's children "... will be able to join hands and sing ... 'Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, we are free at last.'" Amen.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we thank You for creating within us a hunger and thirst for liberty, and justice. Forgive us when we selfishly are only concerned about our rights and not freedom and justice for all. Today as we honor the life of Dr Martin Luther King, Jr., we thank You for one of Your children who had a dream, who saw the vision of Protestant, Catholic and Jews, whites and blacks, people of all races, creeds and colors living out that dream. May we too dream a little today Lord, of the possibilities of life in a nation and a world under God, with life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness under the influence of Your Holy Spirit. As Dr. King takes his place in our history as one of America's spiritual fathers and heroes, may we humbly take our place at the front in the continuing struggle for liberty and justice for all. Bless this food and may our bodies and souls be nurtured today to serve and glorify Your Holy name through loving and serving our neighbor. Amen.

LEADER: In the grand order of the universe, our Lord God wisely has chosen men and women to serve him in each era. Such a servant of our Lord God was Martin Luther King, Jr., whose birth we now commemorate. We are thankful for the life of this 20th Century Prophet of Freedom, who joined the prophets of history in the cry:

CONGREGATION: *In the name of freedom, let my people go.*

LEADER: Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned the ultimate freedom: the freedom achieved in struggle; the freedom reached in brotherhood; the freedom fired by the dream of a man; the freedom inspired by the lot of a people; the freedom free of hate; the freedom full of love.

CONGREGATION: *In the name of freedom, let my people go.*

LEADER: He came into our lives when the yearning of people to be free had turned their attention to justice. For justice, and only justice, we shall follow, that we may live and inherit the land which the Lord our God gives us.

CONGREGATION: *In the name of justice, let my people go.*

LEADER: He reminded us that the spirit of humanity soars from depths of despair with the strength and belief in the promise of the Creator of the universe. We know and we testify: The Lord loves justice... He will not forsake His saints.

CONGREGATION: *In the name of the Lord, let my people go.*

LEADER: And so he set off with us on a journey for justice. It was a journey proclaiming the words of the ancient prophet, Amos: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream." It was a journey calling forth the modern Christian ministry to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

CONGREGATION: *In the name of the prophet, Amos, and in the name of the suffering people, let my people go.*

LEADER: The journey went to Montgomery, to affirm human dignity and courage; to Birmingham, to defeat the sickness of separating human life; to Selma, to ensure the equality of people in human affairs; to a hundred nameless communities to remove painful shackles of oppression and light joyous torches of liberty.

CONGREGATION: *In the name of this journey toward freedom, let my people go.*

LEADER: When war was encountered, the leader of this journey sang with the people: “gonna study war no more.” When violence was met, he spurned it and said; Hate is too great a

CONGREGATION: *In the name of the Promised Land, let my people go.*

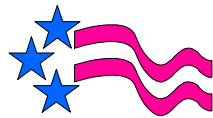
LEADER: So we are thankful that the Spirit of the Lord anointed a man who preached good news to the poor, who rejected segregation and embraced liberation, who prophesied the greatness of his people in struggle for the deliverance of all people.

CONGREGATION: *In the name of the Spirit of the Lord, let my people go.*

LEADER: We praise the Lord God for sending us a man of peace who resisted tyranny, a man of nonviolence who fought for liberty, a man of God who worked for people. Thank You, Lord, for Martin Luther King, Jr. who inspired us with his dream, who walked into our lives and our hearts with marches for justice, who demanded freedom with great courage in the face of great danger, and who has now passed on into your Promised Land. Thank You for his noble legacy to continue the journey to that land here on earth, in life for all people. Thank You, God. You have sent us one who now causes us to say:

ALL: *In the name of Martin Luther King, Jr., let my people go.***

Almighty God, as we depart, go before us as our Guide. Renewing us with the spirit of service and sacrificial love exemplified in the life of Dr. King. May we be agents of hope and justice. May we never pass by on the other side of the road, but walk with eyes open to the needs of our communities, with ears open to the needs of our world; and, with hands open in helpful service to our neighbors. Then we will not only be blessed, but we will be a blessing to our world. This is our prayer. Amen.



MEMORIAL DAY PRAYERS

Almighty God, today we offer our gratitude for all the men and women who have served their country in defense of freedom. For their sacrifice of time, talent and life, we pay them homage. Help all who have gathered here to remember those whose sense of dedication and patriotism led them to preserve the democratic way of life we enjoy. Enable us to follow their lead and do all that we can to further the cause of peace in the world. To this end we seek Your blessing. Amen.

Almighty God we remember on this Memorial Day all Your servants who have departed this life in the service of their country. We pray that having opened to them the gates of larger life, You will receive them more and more into Your joyful service, that they may win with You and Your servants everywhere the eternal victory. For us who are here, may the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. May the Lord lift His countenance upon us and give us peace now and forever more. Amen.

Father, we see our world with many faces--faces of peace and faces of war, faces of plenty and faces of want, faces of joy and faces of sadness. In times past, when the faces of courage and sacrifice were needed, we were blessed with men and women who offered their lives and did not doubt that it was right. Today, in this ceremony, we remember them. Help us, Lord, to show our gratitude by sharing the face of freedom with others. We can do no less for those who have done so much for us. Amen.

O God our strength and redeemer, by Your leading our ancestors brought forth on this continent a great nation, born of faith and struggle, dedicated to liberty and freedom, characterized by justice and courage, and committed to promotion of the common good. A changing world continually challenges these time-honored values, proving the temper of their metal in American lives. In such moments, we seek Your blessing, O Father. Enable us by Your good spirit to grasp the future firmly. Guide us through the maze of temptations by lesser gods. Prosper each initiative for human freedom, for peace and justice in our land, and for the common good of our global village. Bless our speaker today, and each one present. Refresh us in eternal values, and inspire our hearts and lives to fulfill the potential You've placed in each one of us. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, in whose hands are the living and the dead; we give You thanks for all of Your servants who have laid down their lives in the service of our country. Grant to them Your mercy and the light of Your presence, and the assurance of Your peace. Amen.

Father in heaven, this is no time to glory in war, but rather to remember and give thanks for those who have cherished freedom and liberty more than life. As we recall with thanksgiving the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen who have lost their lives in defense of America, let us rededicate our lives to the ideals for which they paid the supreme price. Their legacy is our birthright and our responsibility. Help us so to perform the mission placed in our hands that generations yet unborn will continue to enjoy the freedoms we hold dear. Grant us skill, dedication, and courage for the daily tasks of maintaining the bright torch of liberty. By Your grace and by your power, "let us mount up as eagles, run and not grow weary, walk and not faint" that our land may ever exist in peace and security. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

O Lord our God and Heavenly Father, as we have heard Your voice calling us out of darkness into Your marvelous light, so on this Memorial Day may we hear the voices of the thousands of our fellow Americans who have fallen in the noble cause of national freedom. May it call us to a

sense of unity with them and their loved ones, to share collectively their loss and sadness. May it call us to a renewed determination as military personnel, for a deepened responsibility toward our various tasks in the overall mission of the armed services. May it call us to a mixture of pride and relief for the preserved freedoms that they have purchased. May it call us to a renewed sense of appreciation for the liberty and opportunity that have been safeguarded by their sacrifice. O Lord, we remember, we hear, we serve, with Your wisdom and strength. Amen.

May the Lord our God bless all present here, to memorialize those who died to preserve our liberty and freedom in our nation and in the world. And may the Lord our God remember all those whose sacrifice gave this nation its greatness, progress, and richness. May our memory of them be an honorable one, full of thanksgiving to the Lord who accepted them into His kingdom. The Lord is for all, and in Him we believe, and to Him we pray, remembering all who died in the service of their country, whether in the air, on land, or at sea. O Lord, be gracious and merciful onto them and let Your light shine upon them, for You are our God and unto You we ascribe glory now and forever. Amen.**

O God of Eternity, our time is in Your hands. The reading of the names of our fallen heroes has reminded us of that. And our tribute to them, symbolized by the laying of the wreath in their memory, reminds us that even more important than how long we live is how well. In this quiet moment of meditative memory, we think of them each and remember them before You. We think also of their families and ask that Your great heart of love may sustain them all in the times of deep sadness, loneliness, and even of anger, which breaks their hearts from time to time. We also think today of other heroes who inhabited other times, who like our fallen friends, have helped to build a nation based upon your principles of justice for all and freedom for all--freedom from want, from tyranny, and from fear, and the freedom to worship you as they choose. You blessed America and made her strong. Help her also to be good. Bless and save this land which we love so much, O Lord, and for which any of us would die if necessary. Help her to deposit her trust not alone in military might, not alone in stocks and banks, nor only in the achievements of the human mind, but in that righteousness which alone exalteth any nation. It is that by which alone peace can finally come. May it be, O God, that the words 'In God we trust' be not just a motto inscribed upon our coins, but a rule of life emblazoned upon our hearts. In Your name we pray. O Lord. Amen.

O Lord our God, we remember before You this day the men and women of our Armed Forces who gave their lives that freedom and justice could live. We recall their sacrifices and pray that their deaths not be in vain, that liberty and peace continue in America through our efforts. Give us an abiding sense of the heritage they have bestowed and the grace of Your presence in our ranks, now and evermore. Amen.

Our heavenly Father, on this Memorial Day, we stand in grateful acknowledgment of our past history. We thank Thee for those who have lived and worked to bring us to this present hour. We acknowledge our debt to those who have given their lives for their country, for freedom,

justice, and liberty. May we never forget the value of their sacrifice, the nobility of their courage, nor the tenacity of their endurance, which have purchased for us peace, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Now, O God, help us to prize and keep this heritage that we may be true as they were true, loyal as they were loyal. We humbly pray for peace. Not only among nations, but among and within ourselves. Amen.

Great God of the universe, as we turn our thoughts to the past sacrifices of those who died so that we might live in freedom, grant us hearts and minds that are truly thankful. Help us to fully appreciate the price that was paid at places like Bunker Hill, the Battle of New Orleans, the Alamo, Gettysburg, San Juan Hill, the Ardennes, Omaha Beach, Iwo Jima, Pork Chop Hill, and most recently Lebanon, Granada, and Kuwait. Thank You for those who gave the 'last full measure of devotion' and laid down their lives for this country. As we remember these fallen comrades-in-arms who died in both distant and recent conflicts, fill us with resolve that we might be willing to lay our lives on the line to defend the precious freedoms we still enjoy today. But most of all, enable us to trust You, the living God, and to entrust to Your keeping ourselves and our country. For we know that no man or nation can enjoy the blessings of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness without Your gracious intervention in the affairs of men. Amen.

Father, we thank You for the sacrifice, the ultimate giving of their lives, of these men and women we honor today. Without their willingness to give totally of themselves, we would not continue to remain free. There are men and women who lie in unmarked graves all over this world who gave themselves for our liberty. There are families still mourning the deaths of husbands and brothers, wives and sisters given in the wars of our nation and we continue to seek Your mercy, grace and care for each of these. Thank you Father for them in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we pause to lift our hearts and minds in prayer, let us be mindful of those who have laid down their lives in the service of their country. Lord, we ask Your strength, that we might dedicate ourselves to perfecting Your kingdom of peace and justice among nations. Let us give thanks for the many blessings of freedom which we possess, purchased at the cost of many lives and sacrifices. Fill us with the courage to fulfill our tasks as men and women and in no way break faith with the fallen. We commend these fallen to Your mercy and ask that You give them eternal rest . . . this we ask and pray in your name. Amen.

God, tomorrow is our nation's Memorial Day. There was a time when people in small towns all across our land gathered in parks or cemeteries and heard the flowery oratory, felt the stirring marches. They stood in silence at the crack of rifles and the haunting notes of taps that spoke an 'Amen' to the list of local heroes while some elderly relative sat teary-eyed on the stand. We were there to remember our nation's history and heroes. But that is a part of another age. We don't live in small towns anymore and high school bands no longer march five miles to stand among the graves of men they never knew. So why bother You with a prayer for Memorial Day? Because You know how badly we need a sense of both heritage and destiny, at least a hero or two

we can call to mind, an event that stands out because it was the point at which those values which nourish us were preserved. We can be no greater than the men and women we most admire. So keep our memories alive with our gratitude and gratitude alive with faithfulness. Amen.**

Our Heavenly Father. This memorial day as many celebrate with time off, picnicking, enjoying a beautiful day, and the beginning of summer seasons--we pay honor and tribute to those and their families who remind us what this day is truly about. We call it Freedom. Some were Rangers, some aviators, some SEABEES, some grunts, some navigators, some Bereas, some SEALS, some Marines, some sailors, some mechanics, some Coast Guard personnel, and some Chaplains, all dedicated to the preservation of freedom, even if the sacrifice of Life be required. In our silence, in our tears, in our memory, in our words, in our love, we keep the torch burning today. We remember and we shall never forget. So help us God. Amen.

Two centuries ago Benjamin Franklin challenged a fledgling nation with these words: Let us ever remember that our interests are in concord and not in conflict, and that our true greatness rests in our victories of peace rather than those of war."It is in the spirit of that challenge, that we offer this prayer: Almighty God, we stand here today to pay tribute to brave people, living and dead, who have gone down to the sea in ships. Accept our thanksgiving for their sacrifices and the sacrifices of their families, which have purchased for us a free land. Cause us never to take for granted their devotion to liberty. Grant, we pray, joy and fulfillment to those still living; and for those who are at rest, grant thy peace, until men everywhere shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks . . . and learn of war no more."Amen.**

Almighty God, Lord of life and of death, we gather on this Memorial Day of ___ to honor our country's dead--men and women who have lived and died for the love of their country. So it is for these that we stand here today. Yes, we stand here for what they have done and for what they have given--their lives. So help us to look beyond the graves--the tombstones--and see their lives--lives of people that you loved, people that we loved. Now, along with our entire country, we pause, we reflect, we pay tribute, and we honor all these that have gone on before us. We give thanks for their service, and we verify by our presence here today that their efforts were not in vain. We praise you, O God, King of the Universe. Blessed be Your holy name now and forever. Amen.

O God, You who would not willingly bring suffering to humanity, Your creation -- You have brought us to this place today. That our sensibilities might be shaken; that we might weigh the peace of this garden setting against the pain and terror which brought thousands who died in wars to rest here and in countless other gardens. The contrasts are so stark that we would like not to see, much less experience them. But it is for us, the living to bear remembrance. To remember first, Father, then rejoice, that it was not we who sacrificed self before the enemies of each age of war, but some other son, daughter, brother, father. Few are the names we know on the gravestones, but they read not with our names imprinted and we are glad. And then to remember, Father, that those who sacrificed could well have been us. That all too soon the gifts of war--the

orn body, the early grave--could have been ours; a price that we would have paid, were it not but for fate. WE WERE WILLING, not cowards or heroes, BUT WILLING. And finally, to remember that time underscores the futility of wars, that foes become friends, that friends become foes, until the confusion of friend and foe makes us wonder at it all--and recognize the mindlessness of warring. Dear God, help us to remember the significance of a Memorial Day" and pray indeed for the implements of war to be forged anew into the plowshare and pruning hooks of our great-grandchildren. This is our prayer that we offer in Your Holy Name, in memory of those of the past and in the hope for a future of peace, O God our Father. Amen.**

The Prophet Isaiah tells us: Nations will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore." Lord, on this Memorial Day, we pause to remember with gratitude those who paid the ultimate price for the cause of peace and freedom. We thank You for what they have taught us about honor and courage. Help us to faithfully continue their efforts that our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren may live in a peaceful world and know the reality of beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. Amen.

May the Lord our God bless all present here to memorialize those who died to preserve liberty and freedom in our nation and in the world. In Your great mercy remember our friends and shipmates who died fighting to protect the dignity and the freedom of our land. Let this day be a day of commemoration and honor to all who have served in our nation's military. Have compassion on us and grant that we will be courageous protectors and true guardians of freedom. Encourage us as we seek peace for our world. And, remind us of the blessing of life and liberty, which is peace most precious. Amen.

Eternal Father, who alone rules the destinies of nations and who has deemed that men should live in freedom and not fear, awaken in us a new appreciation of our land that we may apply ourselves to the great work of keeping alive a sense of freedom. Grant us Your spirit as we honor those who have fought a good fight and finished the course. On this day we call to remembrance those who served in far off places and have laid down their arms to march into that land of eternal peace. We remember the sufferings, the fears and the horrors of what they endured. It is a time for us to realize that much of our best blood has been spilled--all over the world--so that we might live free and unchained! May they, and those who suffer wounds for peace, as well as their families, who valiantly and silently also serve, receive rest from their struggles and a 'well done' from You, Captain of their souls. Permit us never to forget our comrades-in-arms from whose fallen hands we have taken up the sacred cause of freedom. Today, we consecrate unto You the debt of our national gratitude which is their rightful due. Keep sacred their sacrifice in our hearts. Keep holy our course in Your sight. Enkindle within us a flame of selfless unwavering devotion to duty that we may never be found wanting in those qualities of spirit and mind which alone are able to preserve hearth and home, the peace of our nation, and the tranquility of the world. We earnestly implore Your providential care as we face the grim and great task which lies ahead. May the day soon come when we can lay down arms

and more earnestly give our attention to do justice, to live in kindness, and to walk humbly in Your sight. Amen.**

O Lord Almighty, remember those who died, fighting to protect the dignity and the freedom of mankind. Let our spirits be proud of them. Let our hearts be compassionate, and our minds clear and determined in giving them honor and respect. And let us be dependent on the loving kindness of the Lord our God. As we remember the departed, let us be true soldiers in war and in peace. Let us be courageous protectors and true guardians of freedom. Let us be the true masters of brotherly love. O Lord, guide us in the way of moral responsibility; enlighten us--true believers in ethics and justice. Let this day be a day of commemoration and honor to those who sacrificed their lives in order to give us liberty, and our nation security. Remember them, O Lord, in Your mercy, and have compassion on us. Make us a generation of wisdom, discipline and good faith. Amen.**

At times, Lord, we wonder at the mystery of nature. . .the height of great mountains. . .the vastness of the sea. . .the complexity of an insect. . .the simplicity of seasons' spring. . .and forget, Lord to wonder at ourselves. Help us to remember. Amen.**

MOTHER'S DAY

Lord, Your Word speaks often of good women and good mothers. We read of mothers like Moses' mother, of Naomi and Hannah. They were women of faith who instilled in their children strong faith in God. Bless our mothers today. Give to them Your love and strength and wisdom that they might love their children with nurture and discipline like unto Your very own nurture and discipline so that their children might indeed rise up and call them blessed. Amen.

O Great Creator God, who has nurtured us tenderly like a mother, we give You thanks, honor, and praise this day. We are grateful beyond words for the gift of mothers, their uniqueness, their strength, and their love. Through their compassionate care we have learned to love others; through their unfailing vigilance and nurturing, we have absorbed values and direction. In their lives is written large the meaning of human devotion and godly patience. With loyalty that places family first and self last, that asks so little for the self, mothers have ever served as models of devotion. Through their example, we better understand the infinite loving kindness with which You have guided, preserved, and protected us, patiently loving us despite all our imperfections, constantly watching over us, and gently correcting us for our good. Lord, amazement fills our hearts at the thought of so great a devotion and faithfulness that we can only respond with joyful gratitude. Thank You for the warmth and security of maternal care. Through these special people, we learn to love You and Your creation. In your name we pray. Amen.

Dear Father in heaven, we thank You for your gift of a mother's love. Each of us has been nurtured and sustained by the unselfish giving of life itself. For all the unending household

chores, the hours spent taking us here and there, the lessons learned by being loved even when we were undeserving, the kind and gentle patience that guides, supports, and protects us through the years; and most of all for teaching us Your ways. May each mother receive an extra measure of Your grace and goodness both now and in the life to come. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

O merciful Lord God, Thou has commanded me to honor my father and mother, and truly Thou also has shown, even until death, humble obedience to Thy parents. From the depth of my soul I fervently beseech Thee, O God, hear my prayer and have mercy upon my parents, who have and are bringing me up in thy grace and love. Protect them from all evil, harm and sickness, grant them health, and mercifully pour forth their efforts and deeds; have mercy on them according to thy great mercy, that faithfully serving Thee, through them I also may be worthy to praise and serve thee. Amen.

Almighty God, You care for us as a mother cares for her children. You see that we have all our needs met and You comfort us when we are suffering. We ask, O God, that today You would bless all the mothers here and elsewhere as they strive to care for their children in the best way they know how. May You grant them patience and kindness, mercy and grace, faithfulness and love for the awesome responsibility they bear. Be present with them so that they know that they are not alone, but You are always there, ready and able to support and strengthen. Also, may all of us take today as an opportunity to give thanks for our mothers and seek in some way to show how much we care for them as we also seek to thank You and show You our appreciation for your everlasting love. Amen.

Dear God, life is filled with important people who show concern and love to us. Yet there is none quite so special as Mother. Thank You for giving her the desire to hold us and the will to direct our steps while we were young. Grant that her compassion and friendship shall always remind us of Your love for us Your children. May she experience peace and grace on this Mother's Day. Amen.

For our mothers, who have given us life and love, that we may show them reverence and love, we pray to the Lord. For mothers who have lost a child through death, that their faith may give them hope, and their family and friends support and console them, we pray to the Lord. For women, though without children of their own, who like mothers have nurtured and cared for us, we pray to the Lord. For mothers, who have been unable to be a source of strength, who have not responded to their children and have not sustained their families, we pray to the Lord. Loving God, as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children, so You watch over Your Church. Bless these women, that they may be strengthened as Christian mothers. Grant that we, their sons and daughters, may honor them always with a spirit of profound respect. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.¹

May the Lord, the Giver of gifts, give unto you that which is good and that which is true; the will to help and the courage to do, a heart that can sing the whole day through, whether the skies are gray or blue. May the Lord, the Giver of gifts, give these to you. Amen.

NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

Lord, You have called us to be guardians of a nation founded upon Your principles. We in the military service are proud to accept the responsibility of this high calling. We dedicate ourselves to our vocation, and ask for guidance and courage in aiding all people to live with freedom, dignity, safety, and peace. Today we pray for our President and all of our national leadership. As they guide our nation, empower them to make responsible decisions based upon your will. Lord, You have blessed us so abundantly, and entrusted us with liberating truths, but sometimes we fail to live up to this high calling as a people of God. We are sorry. Forgive us. Remind us, as often as we need to hear it, that we amount to very little without you. We dedicate ourselves and this nation to Your service. Use us according to Your will in the name of the one true and living God, the one who gives breath and life, the one who allows nations to rise and fall, we pray. Amen.

Good morning, Lord. Thank You for Your presence at our National Prayer Breakfast. As we gather to celebrate the spiritual dimension of our nation's heritage, we thank You for a land where we are free to worship in an amazing fabric of churches, synagogues, temples and mosques. We are grateful for those who have served You faithfully during our brief 200 year existence, as well as those who have given their lives defending the great principles upon which our country is founded. We also ask You to forgive us when we take our heritage for granted; when we act irresponsibly; and when we fail to walk with You as we should. Thank You for this meal we are about to share -- for comfortable homes, caring family and friends, daily provisions, responsible state, local and national leaders, and opportunities to serve others. Help us to be faithful caretakers in all aspects of our lives and to give You the place in our lives You deserve. In the days ahead, give us the wisdom to work with our international neighbors in the pursuit of security and peace -- so that all people may know justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with You. Amen.

Loving Lord, we thank You for the blessings - too numerous to count - which You have showered upon our nation. Help us to be worthy of your gifts of peace and prosperity. We thank You for this national day of prayer during which we pause to recall our country's spiritual roots. Enable us to embrace this noble heritage of faith as we pray in the words of our first President, George Washington. "Grant that we may hear Your word with reverence, receive it with meekness, mingle it with faith, and that it may accomplish in us, Gracious God, the good work for which You have sent it. Bless our families, kindred, friends and country. Be our God, and guide us this day and forever." In Your most holy name we pray. Amen.

O Lord our God, we give You thanks for this early morning hour which gives us the opportunity to reflect upon our lives, our freedom and our faith. Bless each person here this morning and the time that we share together. Please nourish us with the physical and spiritual food of which we are about to partake. We ask these blessings in the name of our Lord. Amen.

Almighty Father, we pray that You will bless this prayer breakfast and the food that is provided to nourish both our bodies and our minds. Help us to pause for a few moments and to realize our need for Your help in our lives. We pray that You will bless this fine squadron, its commander, its officers, its NCOs, and all the airmen that work so hard to make the squadron what it is. We pray that You will give them success and that You will keep them safe. Help us all to have a good day, a bright day, a cheerful day, beginning even now. For it is in the name of our Lord we pray. Amen.

God, early in the morning we gather together to give praise to You for Your great love and care for us, Your children. We know our lives are not always what they should be and we hope by Your grace to do better. Take us through this day with a feeling of Your presence going with us and watching over us. May the nature of our work never diminish the value of human life in our sight, because we are all created in Your image, Lord. We're not perfect people but sailors attempting to keep our world at peace. Bless our efforts and help us to be true peacemakers. In Your precious name we pray. Amen.

Father, life is so full of things and situations that grab our attention and try to keep it. Thank You for a time like this when we can pause, when we can focus on You and reflect. Please forgive us when we leave You out of our day. Help us, Father, to think of You, to hear what You have to say, and to let You in. In the name of our Lord we pray. Amen.

Blessed be You, God, our Father, Blessed be You, the God of all creation. You are the giver of every good gift. For all the many gifts You have given us we thank You. This new day is another promise of Your love. Each fresh beginning is Your gift to us. The bread which we break together this morning nourishes our bodies. May this fellowship which we share together at this table nourish our spirits and enable us to recognize You in our presence. Live in us this day. May You be pleased with our lives today as we ask Your special blessing on our friends and on our families and on all of us. To You be love, honor, and glory, this day and forever. Amen.

Our Heavenly Father, as we close this occasion on which national and military leaders here and all over the world have gathered to express their faith in God, we ask Your blessing and guidance on the service to our country which we may be privileged to give. And, having asked for Your guidance publicly, let us not run along, ignoring it privately. We know that a different world cannot be built by indifferent people. So, please add to all other gifts You have bestowed on us, the blessing of direction and drive. Give us the vision to see the sometimes wide gap between *the ought* and *the is*, and even more, the determination to bridge that gap. Finally, Father, let us not imagine that the mere hearing of words and listening to prayers will suffice to achieve the righteousness that exalts a

nation. Inspire each one here to seek You and find You in daily private prayer. Watch over us, Father, this day, and always. Amen.

Almighty and eternal God, whose hand has made the sun and sea and land and us, Your hand reaches to the ends of the earth. We thank You for every gift, which becomes richer as we share it, and more secure as we guard it for one another. O God, we praise You for the spirit of liberty You have entrusted and established through our fathers before us. Grant that we, their children, may be worthy, as a nation and as individuals, of the heritage and challenge they place in our care. Lord of all, give us the grace to treasure the diversities of gifts within our nation. Unite us as Americans, as defenders of liberty and justice for all. Unite us, also in Your cause of righteousness and in love of our neighbor. Satisfy our starving for a lasting peace. Save us from hatred, confusion and war. And yet, let us stand firmly against cruel and heartless discriminations and racial or religious prejudice. Preserve us from arrogance and bigotry, which lead blindly into intolerance and mindless obedience. O Lord, as a nation, and for us here at _____, a tiny molecule of Your vast creation, enrich and bless our meeting of minds and hearts this morning. Help us to catch a vision of a greater destiny and the call of holy responsibility. May the moral fibers of duty, the call of holy honor, and the love of our country be seen in our every act, our every word, our every thought. O God, truly bless America. In Your holy name. Amen.

Lord God, You graciously provide us with daily bread, and have blessed our land with peace. Your giving deserves our thanksgiving. Grant us nourishment from this time of food, fellowship, and spiritual reflection. Amen.

Dear God, this morning, as Your sun rises over the land, we pause to admire Your creation and feel a part of it. We give You thanks for being with us and for giving us the vehicle of prayer by which we can commune and communicate with You. We rejoice over the equality of prayer . . . for whether we are President or citizen, civilian or military, rich or poor, it matters not, because You have said that all can come to You in prayer. Help us to value this gift, to take the opportunity to offer not only our thanksgiving and praise but our heartfelt cares and concerns for others and ourselves. Help us to listen in the glory of a sunrise, the raging of a rainstorm, or the peaceful silence of a blanket of snow, so that we may become aware that You move through our land and lives in many different ways. We invoke Your blessing upon us, this meal you have provided, and this fellowship. And as uniformed personnel everywhere and in every land, we pray for Your peace. Amen.

O God our Father, You have commanded the light to shine out of darkness and awakened us again to praise Your goodness and to ask Your favor. Accept now the sacrifice of our worship and thanksgiving. Make us to be children of the light and of the day, heirs of Your everlasting inheritance. Remember O God, all our brothers and sisters who stand in need of Your favor on land or sea, in air or space. May our lives ever praise Your wonderful and holy name. Amen.**

Almighty God and merciful Father: as we and our fellow citizens join in prayer breakfasts throughout the world, we beseech Your blessings upon all who have united in a spirit of genuine fellowship and camaraderie. We are grateful for all Your blessings and for our liberty which is the inalienable heritage of all Americans. Continue, we pray, Your protective care over our beloved country. Guard the inhabitants of our blessed land from all evil designs. Implant in the hearts of us all, a desire to work in unity for the promotion of freedom and peace. In a world threatened by discord and fear, endow our President and national leaders with the necessary understanding to successfully cope with the crucial problems of our time. Enable them to overcome the dangerous obstacles in humanity's path. Cause all nations to cease hostilities and to desire everlasting peace. Amen.

The Scripture teaches us that God's people are encouraged to declare every event as a privilege to acknowledge the presence of God. The little things of life which so often escape our attention as being of little consequence, are not so with our God, especially an event such as a National Prayer Breakfast. We thank You, Father God, that our refuge is in You, that You shield us from the troubles of life, and from the tensions of living. Our days are often clouded, but the sunlight is from You. Our joys are shaded, but the perfect smile belongs to You. Be praised this morning our God. Amen.

Our Father, You are Lord of the nations. You have taught us to pray for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life. Forgive us, Lord, for not always remembering to do so. We pray, Father, for all our nation's leaders, especially the President and other elected officials whose actions and decisions affect all of us. Grant them wisdom to search for solutions to problems within our nation and courage to choose the best, not necessarily the easiest solution. We pray for those who lead us on this base and all to whom the task of supervision is delegated. We pray for our nation -- that You would continue to stretch forth Your protecting hand over us. Father, where divisions exist within our nation that separate us by inequality or injustice, we ask You to strengthen us as a nation to correct those divisions and thus be true to the founding principles of our country and more importantly true to You. Remind us that our work is peace. Let Your peace that passes all human understanding touch our lives so that peace with others will follow. As we share this meal, let us be dedicated to the task of relieving the hunger of others. Bless this food to our use and us to the service of others. Amen.

To the great architect of the universe, we give You thanks for this opportunity which brings us together. We pray Your blessings upon this occasion. Bless the food, bless our soul, and bless the fellowship. In Your great name we do pray. Amen.

Heavenly Father, we would like to feel Your presence this early morning. If You could deal with Your servants Adam, Abram, Abimelech, Jacob, Solomon, Nathan and Joseph while they were living, perhaps you can likewise make Yourself known to us at this early hour. We love our nation. We know it is held in Your providence. Now with a more mature love of our country, we can also join in the prayer "God mend Thine every flaw" with humility and self-sacrifice, with courage and

hope and with an exciting new vision of what can be. Awaken us! Walk among us! Be our God! Let us be Your people! Amen.

Our Father, we thank You for our breakfast this morning. May it be to us a symbol and reminder of the larger whole of which we are a part. Someone planted, someone harvested, someone transported, someone packaged, someone purchased, someone prepared and someone serves, and we, O Lord, will enjoy it. Bless this food, and all the occasions that bind us together in a way that makes for both a good meal and good relationships between our military and civilian communities. In Thy holy, just, and loving name we pray. Amen.

Lord God, during this week of national prayer, we turn to you with thanksgiving for our good fortune to live in America - a land of freedom, liberty, justice and equality. Grant us strength to defend these ideals with resolve and determination. Bless our efforts with success, and our leaders with the courage and foresight that will lead us closer to our dream of a world at peace. Amen.

Our Father, remind us today of the good things You have given to us as a nation, and the challenge we have to share them with others in your name. We ask You to bless our President and government officials. Guide them with wisdom and fill them with vision to see the common good and pursue it. For the people of this land, uplift them with a sense of self-respect and a driving desire for justice. And for those of us gathered here, may we be thankful for our freedom, responsible in our actions and assured that you are our God, and we are Your people. Amen.

Lord, we come to You on the occasion of this National Prayer Breakfast filled with reverence and pride--reverence for Almighty God and pride in our nation, our national leaders and our calling. Grant to us, and all those in authority, strength and vision for a better world: "where there is no vision, the people perish". This morning we honor the memory of all those who have given their lives in the pursuit of peace--young lives, strange lands, elusive adversaries, noble causes. Idealists but not ideologues. Peacekeepers, not warmongers. Patriots all. In our zest for life, help us to be willing to lay ourselves on the line so that freedom may flourish, so that those who have known nothing but turmoil may know peace; so that the hungry may be satisfied, the naked clothed, the shackled set free; so that we may never shrink from our heritage or flinch from our commitment to the God in whom we trust. Amen.

O Lord, as we gather today in Your name to celebrate the spiritual dimension of our nation's heritage, we praise You for your providence that led our forefathers and mothers to this land where they found refuge from oppression and freedom to worship. We thank You for the patriots who gave their lives defending liberty and progress. As we give You thanks for the food before us, may we also remember with gratitude the blessings of comfortable homes, caring friends, daily provisions, responsible leaders, enriching schools, opportunities to achieve and an amazing variety of churches, synagogues, and mosques in which to worship. In the days ahead, may the hope contained in the American dream be extended in practical ways to every citizen. And may we work with our

international neighbors in the pursuit of security and peace to the end that all people in the world may know justice, love mercy and walk humbly with You. Amen.

Eternal Father, strong to save, we need Your guidance and wisdom in our country today. Save us from empty threats, from stupid acts. Help us to think. Help us to find what will work in our time. Help us to look for justice and to be responsible peacekeepers. Remind us that we are people dedicated to freedom and that our true freedom is to do your will, not ours. Guide those who carry the heavy burdens of responsibility, our leaders and those who work on, above, and below the ground this day. Teach us to pray for them. We live in a land where the people decide what is going to be. Father, help us, the people of this land to pray for the right, to search for the right, to find the right, to do the right. For this we invoke your presence and blessing. Amen.

NATIVE AMERICAN/“INDIAN” HERITAGE PICNIC

Eternal God, Great Father of all mankind, on this day when we honor native American Indians. We pray that You will destroy the prejudice that turns us against our brothers and sisters. Teach us that we are all children that You delight in, whether we are of black or red or white, yellow, or brown skin. Encourage us to celebrate and work together in mutual love and respect so that we may truly be one people –Americans– who proudly show the world that peoples of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds can live together in peace and harmony. Thank You for this enlightening occasion and for the food that we can enjoy, one with the other. Amen.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your watch-care over us this past year and for bringing us safely to this hour. We are grateful for Your everlasting arms which have supported us in our work and strengthened us for the journey into the year ahead. Lead us forward to serve You more perfectly that we may achieve what is best for this nation and that which advances the kingdom of righteousness, justice and truth. Now as we come to the end of this year and stand upon the threshold of the new, we offer this benediction. “May the Lord bless You and keep You. May the Lord make his face to shine upon You and be gracious unto you; may the Lord lift up his countenance upon You and give You peace.” Amen.

Chaplain: If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

Congregation: The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Chaplain: Friends in Christ, the New Year has come. With the gift of tomorrow, our living Lord offers us new life, a new beginning, an opportunity for repentance, and a new day in which to serve.

Let us kneel and receive the future joyfully as a gift from his hand (congregation kneels). Let us prepare to receive the New Year by imploring the forgiveness of our gracious God for the failures of the past. Hear the prayers of Your people, Lord, as we confess our self-centeredness, our apathy toward human needs and our lukewarm commitment to You.

Congregation: (Silent Prayer)

Chaplain: Let us prepare to receive the New Year by thanking our God for his gracious love and forgiveness. Hear us Lord as we give thanks for Your sustaining power through all the personal trials we have known this past year.

Congregation: (Silent Prayer)

Chaplain: Let us prepare to receive the New Year by resolving to live more fully for Christ. In this New Year, may we receive You as Lord and eagerly strive to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others.

Congregation: (Silent Prayer)

Chaplain: Let us prepare to receive the New Year by praising God for his manifold blessings. Hear us Lord as we praise You for the personal blessings of this past year.

Congregation: (Silent Prayer)

Chaplain: He who sits upon the throne says, "Behold, I make all things new." Welcome us, Lord Jesus, as we welcome one another into this New Year which you have made. Grant that we may be made new and Your light might shine through us.

All: Amen.

Lord of the universe, we stand on the threshold of a New Year mindful of the events of this past year and aware of the uncertainties facing us and our world. As we move into the new year, anxious yet hopeful, help us, O Lord, to make real the unrealized dreams we cherish. Strengthen us in our resolve to walk in better paths, growing in our love for family, friends and country. Let this year bring us one step closer to our ultimate dream of peace. Amen.

O God, how does one adequately sum up a year of days? How do You bring to mind and to prayer those memories, those children of time, that crowd our present past and give definition to what we have become? Tonight, O God, help us in our attempt to bring together, rummage through, and draw out the feelings and thoughts which cause us to recognize our common community and our oneness in You. In prayer, O Lord, bring us to see that emotional cloth which covers the contours of another year in our lives so that we might find ourselves complete, dressed as servants of Your holy will.

O Lord, whatever comprises our history together-our fears and sorrows, joys and success-we bring before Your presence this night, this eve of another year. For You are the ancient of days and the eternal yes -- the same today as You were yesterday and will be in our hoped for tomorrow. O God, we commend ourselves and those we so deeply love to Your gracious care. Keep us in Your hands and bless us both now and forevermore. Grant us Your peace this night. Amen.

Holy Father, we ask You for renewal this day. As we consider our goals for this new year, remind us to discuss them with You. May we who are filled with our careers not neglect our families. Help us to evaluate, and if necessary, to restructure our priorities. We commit ourselves to You this year in church, home, and profession. Give us opportunities to communicate Your love and our faith.

In spite of our human frailty, bless all our endeavors. May our activities this year honor You and reap eternal significance. This year may You be preeminent in our lives, for we ask this in Your blessed name. Amen.

O Lord, we plan and purpose and yet in actuality we know little of the future that empty end of the hour glass that is filled by the events and emotions that mark the days to come. We ask this night, O God, that You would lift from us the weight of the past year and allow us again to renew our vision of a world in which we can celebrate the gift of life which You have given us. Amen.

Now the Lord will bless You all. He will lift You when You fall and speed You on Your way this new year. He will flood You with his grace when he lifts his shining face to help You overcome every fear. He will give You peace wherever You are bound. Amen.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father and Provider, we come before Your throne of grace this morning very much aware of our need for Your providential care during the new year. We pray that You will provide for us as You have so graciously done in the year which is now past. Help us not to be bogged down by anything which has happened in the past year. For the sins we have committed, we pray that You will provide us with forgiveness. For the mistakes and failures of the past, we pray that You will renew us with hope and optimism for the future. For those whom can't seem to let go of the past, we pray that You will break their hold and help them to look to what lies ahead. For those with broken hearts and tearful eyes, we pray that You will provide true friendship and bring back joyful smiles. For those with confused minds and endless problems, we pray that You will provide clear judgment and strength to endure. For those with physical injuries or bad health, we pray that You will provide Divine comfort and speedy recovery. For those parents who need help in raising their children, we pray that You will fill them with love and understanding for each other. For those couples whose marriages are in trouble, we pray that You will help them to see the good in each other instead of the bad. For our military members who face danger in times of peace as well as in times of war, we pray that You will provide safety and protection. For those in positions of power whose decisions affect the lives of others, we pray that You will provide wisdom from above. For our country, which was founded on trust in You as our God, we pray for peace and a renewal of our faith. We give you thanks for our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have the forgiveness of our sins and the gift of eternal life. Help us to move boldly into the future knowing that our Lord will be with us every step of the way, for it is in his precious name that we pray. Amen.

Almighty Father, this evening marks once more the transition of one year into another, and again prompts the reflection of where we have been and where we are going. The past is evident; the future, as usual, is unknown. Please grant, Father, that whatever this future year may hold, may it be one of continuing creation, so that, in union with our fellow man, we may develop lives marked by peace and good will to all. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR THE NATION

Almighty God, You have given us this great land as our heritage. We humbly pray that we may always remember Your generosity and faithfully do Your will. Bless our land with honest industry, truthful education and an honorable way of life. Defend our liberties and strengthen the resolve of

the people who have come from throughout the world to make America their home. Lead us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong. Help us to appreciate the opportunities that are ours as we struggle to bring harmony to an unsettled world. May we balance our concern for justice with a willingness to display mercy, and may our concern for security be tempered with a willingness to take risks that will produce worthwhile change for the good of all people. O Lord, we pray for Your guidance as we work together for the best interest of our communities, our nation, our world, and the ultimate goal of peace. When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful and in troubled times, may our deepest trust be in You. Amen.

Our heavenly Father, we bow before You as the one perfect source of all wisdom, goodness and mercy. Teach us to be wise in ways that exalt truth, fidelity and honor. Instill within us a passion for human service and an ambition to contribute to the greater good of our nation. May right and justice ever be cornerstones of our free society. Bless our country and continue to strengthen us with the ideals of her founders. Amen.

We are thankful for the lives, the skills and the accomplishments of those who founded our country. We are grateful for our national heritage, for the valor of our heroes, the devotion of patriots, and the freedom of religious expression. Remind us again that the price of freedom is never cheap, that vigilance must be our motto, that sacrifice and devotion to duty is our calling. Increase our love for our country that we may guard it as a trust. May we be strong and steadfast in our devotion to freedom, determined in our intolerance of evil, and committed in our dedication to justice and the pursuit of peace. Amen.

O Lord, we pray for America, thanking You for our forefathers whom You mercifully guided in building this beautiful nation -- a nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. We pray humbly for all those men and women who, with faith in You and their country, gave themselves for our freedom. In memory of them, give us a passionate determination to be instruments of peace among the nations of the world. Let our hope to truly be "America the beautiful, one nation under God." Amen.

God, we pause to acknowledge Your presence here with us; to remember that your dream for us is an abundant life -- a life that is filled with joy, love and peace. Lord, we are grateful for the dedicated men and women who molded this nation into a land of the free and a home of the brave, a country for all people. Those who passed the torch of liberty to us, invested much of themselves in personal sacrifice. They gave their energy to help neighbors build homes; their food to feed those who lost employment; their time to encourage the sick; and a place of rest to those who were homeless. Father, You have blessed us in this country with much beyond the simple necessities of daily life. Help us to emulate our founders by sharing our wealth with those less fortunate than ourselves, so that we may truly pass on to others the hope of opportunity in a caring nation. Bless us now and guard our country always. Amen.

Loving Father, we pause to ask Your continued blessing upon America. You have given us this land as a trust. May we be worthy of our heritage and mindful of Your favor. Through Your guiding hand, we pray that You will enable us to carry out the responsibilities that are ours as those called to defend freedom and preserve peace. Grant, we pray, a special measure of Your wisdom to our President and all who serve in positions of authority. Bless our country and keep her strong. Amen.

Heavenly Father, in the beginning you created us to be free, to exercise the right of choice with all the responsibilities such privilege requires. We indeed are thankful for every blessing You have given us. Today, we are especially grateful for Your love expressed through the freedom we enjoy as individuals and as a nation. Remember, Lord, those who sacrificed to make our independence a reality. Bless us as we strive to preserve the heritage they left us. May our efforts lead to peace among the nations of the world. Amen.

Lord, we thank You for America and for the virtues of democracy -- virtues which ensure liberty and justice throughout the land. Our nation is one blessed with freedom and hope. Guide us in our efforts to live in peace. Spare us from attitudes that detract from our heritage. Affirm in us our dependence upon You, and instill within us, the courage to serve you faithfully. Bless those who lead us with wisdom. May our efforts to defend liberty illumine the way of peace and aid in bringing happiness to all. Amen.

O Lord, grant us freedom with discipline, motivation with understanding, and determination with compassion. O Lord, give us the will for self-preservation, and the strength and power to help those who are willing to help themselves. O Lord, give us insight and patience, wisdom along with a sense of duty, and ability coupled with restraint to adjust to the changes in nature and men. O Lord, show us Your ways, and never deliver us into the hands of any enemy. Bless us with Your heavenly and earthly bounties, and never let us be in want. Guide us in being friendly and generous toward one another. Instill in us faith and knowledge, and let all of us have the ability to live at peace within ourselves. O Lord, show the people of our nation the right way to serve and guard the sacredness of all orderly freedoms. Let us realize that You have given us riches not given to any other nation under the sun, let us be ever grateful, and accept the responsibilities which they entail. You are our God, and to You we would ascribe glory and honor, now and forever. Amen.**

PRAYERS FOR NATIONAL LEADERS

Be with our national leaders, O Lord. Give them courage to face the truth, prudence to make sound, and a willingness to work for a strong government. We want always to be Your agents for peace in the world -- not a peace based on military parity alone, but one that is based on harmony and justice for people everywhere. As we keep ourselves strong and alert in the face of threats to our security, help us to keep alive the vision of a world in which all people are free from political and economic oppression; free to celebrate their unity as Your daughters and sons -- children bound together in Your love. We offer our prayer in gratitude for the many gifts You have given us, especially the gift of freedom. Amen.

Father, we commend our nation to Your merciful care, that being guided by Your providence, we may dwell secure in Your peace. Grant to the President of the United States, members of his administration, Congress and all in authority, wisdom and strength to know and do Your will. Help them by the power of Your Holy Spirit to formulate laws and policies that advance the cause of justice and peace. May our leaders be ever mindful of their calling to serve instead of being served. May Your commandments be their guide. And grant that both rulers and people will serve You with one mind and heart. Amen.

(Breakfast at 8th and I for Members of Congress)

Our Father, we invoke Your blessing upon our President . . . our Legislators . . . our Commandant . . . our Marine Corps. Bless the authority here represented. Help us to learn that he who leads is called to be a servant; and to whom much is given, much is required. Help us to be faithful in support of one another as we work for justice and the common good, for peace itself. We ask this in Your holy name. Amen.**

POW-MIA DAY PRAYERS

Eternal God, for a few moments tonight we remember our shipmates who have been prisoners of war or are missing in action. As our nation observes a POW/MIA day of remembrance, may their heroic example cause us to look deep within ourselves to see what resources we might have to persevere. Lord God, each of us gathered here has known the grief of death and the agony of not knowing about the well-being of our loved ones. We pray, therefore, for fathers, mothers, spouses, children and friends of POW-MIA's who do not know the cleansing of competed grief because their hopes still flickers. We are grateful to our POW-MIA compatriots for their sacrifice, their tenacity, and their faithfulness. From them, O Lord, we learned again that You are our rock and salvation, our fortress and shield. Let is be so for us always, Mighty God, our redeemer and friend. Amen.**

Eternal and ever-living God, in whom we have our faith, our hope and our trust, we thank You for our heritage of freedom and liberty. With joyful hearts, we give you thanks for those noble and courageous individuals who have returned from prison camps, strong in their faith and steadfast in their resolve. May their examples of heroism, sacrifice and perseverance continue to be an inspiration to us all. Keep us ever mindful of those families who still have loved ones missing in foreign lands. Help us to share more deeply in their anguish. Sustain and strengthen them in their solitude and sorrow by Your presence. For all the men and women of the armed forces, grant them Your protection; preserve them from harm; make them courageous, vigilant and faithful in the performance of their duties. Give them the assurance of Your guidance and strengthen them that they may serve in accordance with Your will. Finally, we pray for Your benediction as we join with men and women of good will around the world to work for peace and justice among all people and all nations. Amen.

SCOUT SUNDAY

O God, Your will is that all Your children should grow into fullness of life. We lift to You the ministry of scouting. We offer You thanks for camping, to teach us that the world is our great home; for study and work, to build character; for service, to see our responsibility to those in need; for encouragement in genuine patriotism and vital faith. Bless the work of scouting, in this place and around the world, that, through its efforts, the young may, like our Lord, increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with You and all people. Amen.

CUB SCOUTS

O Lord, the family is the only true institution that has the power to build new civilizations, and to cultivate new cultures. It has the power to bring up new responsible generations to guard and protect the rights of all the living beings in this world. Therefore, O Lord, bless the family, and bless all the Cub Scouts, their sponsors, their parents, their brothers and sisters, their relatives and their friends. Also, we beseech You to bless the food and drink which we are about to receive for You are holy and blessed. Amen**

SECRETARIES' DAY

O Lord, today we acknowledge and celebrate the fact that behind every successful office there is a good secretary. We recognize their crucial part in our mission. We thank You for their commitment to the highest standards of excellence. They also make the work place nicer, more pleasant, human, and special. May they accept this luncheon as our real appreciation for what they do to make life better all year long. Bless this food and each person present. And to You, Lord, in whose name we pray. Be praise and Thanksgiving, now and forever. Amen!

THANKSGIVING DAY

Thanksgiving Proclamation of President George Washington:

Whereas, it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly implore His protection and favor; Whereas, both the houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and single favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness!

Now, therefore, I do recommend this day to be devoted by the people of these great states to the service of that great and glorious being who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be, that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country."

Blessed be the Lord our God, who feeds the whole world with goodness, grace and mercy; whose loving kindness endures forever. Through Your gracious love, we enjoy the bounty of this Thanksgiving Day. Nourish and sustain us with the food we eat and with the gift of Your presence. Amen.

We offer our thanks to You, O God, for all we have received, though undeserving. For the investment of time, talent, and even the lives of those who have gone before us and made free nations great. We have benefited from all the past efforts of men and women who have sacrificed so that we may enjoy freedom and prosperity. We are especially grateful for families who love us and friends who stand by us through good and bad times. We confess our failure to say a quiet "Thank You" for the basic pleasures of food, shelter, and clothing. Help us to face the future with courage, that we might have the strength to meet any challenges. We do not pray for easy lives, but for the assurance to face life confidently, through the eyes of faith, holding fast to hope. We do not ask to receive much, but only to share the resources we have with those whose need is greater than our own. Turn hearts cold with indifference into ones warmed by compassion. Accept our gratitude for all your mercies to us which are fresh every day. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

Heavenly Father, as Thanksgiving arrives, we think of the Pilgrims who sailed across a stormy ocean long ago, in search of religious freedom and a new opportunity for life. Early on they learned that faith in You, combined with hard work, is an unbeatable recipe for contentment. They were supreme realists. Centuries later, we are still pilgrims. Often forgetting the formula of faith and hard work, we wonder why life so often disappoints us. At our Thanksgiving feast, may we take a long, loving look at our lives, all stuffed with blessings, and then remember the source of all that is good. Make our holiday a time of true thanksgiving for all we have, and may we offer both a prayer to You and a hand to those who have less. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

Our Father, we thank You for this food and for the beauty of the country in which we now live and serve. We thank You for our heritage as Americans, and the strong feelings we have about our country and freedoms. Strengthen us with this food that we might live in honor to You and our country. As we depart this table, send us out grateful that You have called us into an unfinished world, to share a hand with You in its completion. Amen.

Almighty God, we thank You and praise You for Your great goodness to us. We are grateful for life in all its fullness and variety; for beauty and strength and stability in the created world around us; for light and color, and the rhythm of the seasons. We stand in awe of Your created works; the mountains towering toward heaven; the canopy of stars, each marking and reflecting the touch of Your hand. And yet with all of this grandeur, You have seen fit to gift each of us in special ways. We lift our hearts in gratitude to You when we remember how intimate is Your constant and abiding care for each of us. You have showered us with blessings of love. For our families and friends, and for all the human relationships that enrich our lives, we praise You. For

the daily gifts of home and food and work, and for those who bring us joy, we thank You. And now, most merciful Father, we pray that You will receive and sanctify our offering of worship: our gifts and our lives. We give You praise from grateful hearts. Amen.

Almighty God, we give You thanks for the goodness and loving kindness You have shown toward us. For the blessings You have given in the past and for the promise of Your continued faithfulness, we thank You. For the blessings of life, we give You praise. More importantly, Lord, we thank You for the redemption You provided us in Your word. We are prone to forget the source of our blessings. Help us, Lord, today to remember, and in remembering, to show forth our praise and thanksgiving not only with our lips, but with our lives. In Your name we pray. Amen.

“O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come; our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.” We thank You, Lord, for a warm dry place to sleep, for abundant good food to take away our hunger, for friends whose presence helps to ease the boredom of waiting. We thank You, Lord, for the gift of life itself, and for the meaning and purpose that our faith in You brings to our lives. Give us now Your peace. In Your strong and powerful name we pray. Amen.

Our power is shut off, and suddenly we become thankful for electricity. Our garbage is not picked up, and suddenly we become thankful for the garbage collector. The toilet doesn't flush, and suddenly we become thankful for plumbers. Our roof leaks, and suddenly we become thankful for carpenters. A good friend dies, and suddenly we discover how much he meant to us. Why is it, Lord, that we take for granted the uncounted blessings of life until they are removed from us? We take for granted, the mind You have given us, the beauty of the earth around us, the rain and soil combining to produce our foods, the love of family and friends surrounding us. Today we thank You, for being patient with us, for not forgetting us when we forget You, for loving and forgiving us, for music and singing, for rest and leisure, for those who understand us, for laughter and joy, for being with us now. Most of all we thank You for not withholding the blessings of life from us even though we take them for granted. Bless us and our families as we celebrate this, our national day of Thanksgiving. Bless this food for our nourishment and renew us for service to You and each other. Amen.

Gracious Master and our Lord, it is once again that we set the sails of the Mayflower reaffirming religious tolerance, seeking peace and prosperity, and giving thanks for Thy most bountiful blessings. We pray that Thou will blow the winds of purity and clean our ship of sin and evil. We pray that Thou will send the navigational winds and continue to chart us in a Godly direction. As our ship becomes old and tattered, we pray that Thou will salvage but a small part, that it will serve to remind us of that first voyage and first Thanksgiving where the Pilgrims gathered their harvest, prepared, ate, and gave thanks unto Thee for bringing them safe to shore and sustaining them over the long winter. Dear Father, bring us again to shore, bring us from the mountain of selfish abundance to the valley of sharing with the less fortunate. Bring us from the

great seas of arrogance to the small ponds of humility; and most of all, bring us from the ocean of uncertainty to safe shores in Thy arms. Hear our prayer, dear Lord, and grant us Thy peace. Amen.

Dear Heavenly Father, we humbly bow before You as the Creator of the Universe, the giver and sustainer of life, to thank You for Your bountiful blessings upon us. We thank You for Your presence in the history of our nation. Your presence is evident from the time of our pilgrim forefathers to Your abiding presence in our everyday life. Make us aware that all that we are and that all we possess is truly a product of Your grace. We thank You for a time of Thanksgiving; a time when a nation stops, the wheels of industry grind to a stop, the tables of commerce close in a period of thanks. We pray that this spirit may be with us throughout the year. We humbly pray that Your blessings will continue to be upon this nation and its people. Amen.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who has given us good land for our heritage and blessed us with freedom, we humbly beseech Thee to bless us this day of Thanksgiving with honor, courage, wisdom, and duty. Grant us the grace to reaffirm our moral and spiritual values. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance and all evil. Bless our President, our civilian and military authorities, and the members of the United States Armed Forces. Bless our churches and remember us who have gathered here in Thy name to bless thee, praise thee and thank Thee. For thou art blessed who feeds us and gives life to our flesh; who fills our hearts with joy and happiness, and enables us to do good for others in Thy name. Amen.

I thank You, O God, for a country that allows, even encourages us, to pray, to give thanks, and to share our spiritual needs in public fashion. In such moments the sacrifices of the past make sense and the mystical fellowship of free people continues to gel and take hold. I ask, O God, that the sacrifices we now make, however limited, may add to the tradition evidenced and honored today. So often, O Lord, the love and service to our fellow person that we intend is much greater than the love we actually give. Help us, O Lord, by selfless deeds to make up the difference. Give us a good night. Amen.

Our Heavenly Father on this Thanksgiving Day, we pray that we may not be numb to the many blessings for which we ought to be thankful. Give us your gift of contentment, which we may not always waste our time desiring more, but learn to use, enjoy and be thankful for what we have. Bless us in all that is right and correct us in all that is wrong. Give life to our thankful and good intentions, lest they be stillborn. May our hearts now truly reflect thankfulness for the meal we are about to eat, the appetite which enables us to enjoy it, but most of all for You, the Provider of both. Amen.

O Lord, make this hour a time in which we are graced with Your presence. Let our fears be replaced by our hope in the future things to come; so that we may be witnesses of Your promises. Make this moment a time in which a family gathers to support each other. Bless all here gathered and this bounty we receive to the nourishment of our bodies. Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven, we give You thanks for this holiday season and especially for this Thanksgiving Day. A day which is meaningful to us as a nation because of our heritage, and a day which is equally meaningful to us as individuals because of the closeness it brings to our families and because of the memories of good times spent with those that we love in days gone by. Help us to be grateful for the freedom that we so often take for granted. Keep us mindful that thousands upon thousands of servicemen and women gave their lives that we might be free. Help us to be truly grateful for our families and our friends and our loved ones. Keep us mindful of how precious these relationships are, and of how quickly they can be changed because of the suddenness of death or the length of separation caused by our jobs. Help us to be grateful for this fine Thanksgiving Dinner that has been prepared for us. Keep us mindful that many thousands of people in our world are starving to death at this very hour. Bless the ones who have worked so hard preparing this very special meal for us to enjoy. Help us to take the time to say, "Thank You," to them for their work and their concern for us on this special day. Most of all help us to be grateful for Your steadfast love for us regardless of how rebellious we become. We ask these blessings in Your holy name. Amen.

O Lord, make this hour a time in which we are graced with your presence. Let our fears be replaced by our hope in the future things to come; so that we may be witness of your promises. Make this moment a time in which a family gathers to support each other. Bless all here gathered and this bounty we are to receive to the nourishment of our bodies. Amen.

O God, our most merciful Heavenly Father, who made us in Your image and loved us before we knew You, we give thanks to You for the life and the spark of love You created in us. We thank You for the fierceness of anger, for it helps us to recognize and appreciate love as it overcomes anger; we thank You for those who dare to doubt because they help us grow by causing us to reevaluate our beliefs. We thank You for people with insight, for they show us the folly of our ways. Then, O Lord, we thank You for the grace which makes all gifts possible -- not cheap grace but grace bought by Your son's shed blood, given for us in love. We raise this prayer of Thanksgiving in the name of the risen savior. Amen.

Lord our God, often we see holidays merely as breaks in our routine, as times to lay back and take it easy, to withdraw within ourselves and escape from the hassles of life. Lord, we do indeed need those kinds of breaks. But help us too, Lord, to catch the deeper meaning of this holiday. To sense the richness of the blessings which surround us. To rejoice in the great gift of our country and the freedoms within which we live, freedoms we have pledged our lives to protect. Help us to experience gratitude, Lord, for those around us, our families, our friends, our comrades in arms. Help us, especially, Lord, to understand Your part in all of this and to give You the praise and the glory. We ask all this in Your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God, You have abundantly blessed America and its people. We give You thanks for this great country and the liberty we enjoy. We give You thanks for forefathers with wisdom and a vision for freedom. We give You thanks for families and friends. May this Thanksgiving

remind us of our past blessings, and may it cause us to recognize Your work in our land today. Thank You for loving us and enabling us to work and produce the fruit of the land. We give thanks. Amen.

Our Lord and God, we give thanks to You this day. We give You thanks for the abundance that You have bestowed upon us. We are thankful not only for the abundance of material possessions, but also for Your faithfulness in times of joy and grief, laughter and sorrow, health and sickness, assurance and doubt, peace and war, life and death. We are able to do Your will and give thanks in all things, because You are with us in all circumstances. We thank You in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The paraphrased prayer of David, (I Chronicles 29:10): “O Lord, You are the God we have known all our lives. And we pause to offer our Thanksgiving and praise. Everything in the heavens and on this earth belongs to You and all that we have is really Yours. We are so privileged to live in your kingdom. We recognize that You are in control of everything and You are the Divine Commander over us all. All our riches and honor come from You alone. It is at Your discretion that we have been so greatly blessed. It is from Your hand that all our power and strength, all our greatness and goodness have come. Bless now this food and our fellowship together tonight. Help us always to stay in Your favor, for we do honor and bless Your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God, we humbly give You thanks for all Your goodness and loving kindness, and all the blessings of this life. But above all, we thank You for your unspeakable gift of love in the redemption of the world through your Son, Christ Jesus -- the source of hope and the means of grace. Instill in us an awareness of all Your goodness, that our hearts may be overflowing with gratitude, that we might show forth our praise, not only with our lips, but also with our lives, giving ourselves to Your service and walking in Your sight with all holiness and righteousness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Almighty God, our Father, we approach Your throne of grace this morning with hearts full of thanks for the many ways in which we are so richly blessed. We give You thanks for our food, our clothes and our warm homes. We give You thanks for our families, our friends and our neighbors. We give You thanks for our wives, our husbands and our children. We give You thanks for our jobs, our possessions and the conveniences which we take for granted. We give You thanks for life, for health and for the good times we enjoy. We give you thanks, O Lord, for even the hard times, the difficult times and the sad times, for we know they help us grow in faith, in love, and in character. But most of all, O Lord, we give You thanks for loving us as you do with a steadfast love. We give You thanks for not leaving us alone to die in our sins but instead providing forgiveness through the gift of Your only Son, the Lord Jesus, through whom we have eternal life to be thankful. Cause us to grow in faith as each day passes. Help us to love You and to serve You, regardless of what the storms of life may shower upon us. We ask these blessing in the name of our Savior. Amen.

Our Father, we are especially mindful this Thanksgiving week to count and give thanks for our many blessings: for families, health, a place to work, the freedom to worship, and for the renewed hope of positive change in the world. May occasions such as this strengthen goodwill and understanding among friends and allies. As You have so richly blessed our countries Lord, may we ever seek to be a blessing in our world. We thank You for our daily bread O Lord. This we pray in Your holy, just and loving name. Amen.

Father, we come to You in prayer on this Thanksgiving Eve. We thank You Lord for the bountiful gifts which we have received, for the blessings of freedom, and support of friends and families. Father, You are the One Eternal Creator from whom all blessings do flow. Grant, we beseech You, Your holy presence to everyone. May all creation come to know Your name and give thanks. Amen.

Let us go forth with a Thanksgiving to God in our hearts that moves us to give . . . food and shelter to care for those who lack . . . a listening ear for those who hurt . . . a helping hand for the weak . . . that the giver of every good and perfect gift may be glorified as the love He gives touches the lives of our neighbors, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eternal God, we come to You as thankful people. In preparation of our national holiday we lift words of gratitude for Your providence through another year. Help us to be grateful for the blessings of freedom, and the support of our fellow workers, friends and families. Make us mindful and responsive to the needs of others. Especially bless our shipmates who are separated from their families and friends during this season. Accept our thanks now for the food and fellowship we are about to enjoy around this table. Amen.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your plan for love and lovers and for giving us the ability to experience the special relationship between a man and a woman. Since You are the author and designer of human love, we ask You to teach us to grow in our love. Help us to love You Lord with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. Enable us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Help us to love with God's love -- love which is always forgiving, patient, kind and faithful -- love which is never jealous or envious, never haughty, selfish or rude. Bless our time of fellowship. Thank You for the food You have given us. Thank You that we can share together in this special occasion. Amen.

VETERANS' DAY

Almighty God, the cause of liberty is Yours. It is likewise the cause of those who have defended it against tyranny and oppression. Remembering the veterans who have served in America's Armed Forces, we give You thanks. We are grateful that You inspired their sense of

patriotism and strengthened them in unselfish service. Their courage and vigilance insured the freedom and peace we enjoy today. Grant, we pray, O Lord, to each of them a generous portion of Your grace and to America, our native land, Your blessing. Amen.

Eternal God, on this Veterans' Day, we are reminded of a tiny cemetery far across the sea where snow-capped Himalayas pierce the sky. In those mountains is a small grave marker on which are written these words: "When you go home, tell them of us and say we gave all our tomorrows that You might have today." And so we pause to remember those brave warriors and others like them who gave their tomorrows for the ideals we value today -- the ideals of freedom, justice and peace. How many pilots have been lost? How many foxholes were marines' and soldiers' graves? How many sailors died at sea that we might have today? Perhaps we will never fully know the number, but they are known to You, O God, and we ask Your mercy that they might be held tightly in Your hand and covered with Your grace. Renew our spirits and grant us strength to serve You and our country with pride and courage. Comfort those who have lost loved ones in the cause of peace. Equip each of us to persevere and make right the wrong. Prepare us for that time when the last trumpet will sound, when the last flag will be folded, when the last salute has been given, when all the tomorrows have given way to today. Amen.

Gracious God, our heavenly Father, we want honestly to thank You for the blessings You have entrusted to our use. So many of them came so repetitiously that we live as if they were just part of the normal scheme of life. When we stop and think, we know that isn't so. We do thank You for the life we have today. We thank You for friends, family and the freedoms which have been given to us. On this occasion we offer up special prayers of thanksgiving for those who sacrificed much for us. Many actually gave their lives so that we might live in freedom; and we pray that our appreciation might lead us to live thankful lives distinguished by responsibility. We do not pretend to appreciate fully the pain, loneliness and suffering they and their families endured. But we thank You for Your love which defies all attempts of description. We entrust to Your loving care all those who have preceded us into Your presence. And we pray that we, the living, might also entrust ourselves to You, daily seeking Your wisdom and direction, in our lives everyday. In the spirit of these prayers, we commit this day and our lives to You. Amen.

Heavenly Father, in all things You call us to remember. We remember Your promise to Abraham, Your action in the lives of the prophets and Israel, and Your grace and promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Now we gather to remember those who once were our comrades-in-arms and now rest in You. May we always hold dear the striving for peace, the will of duty and the faith in You for which they lived. By your grace, continue to be with us in order that one day we may never again face war. Be with us that Your children will all live in peace and in faith toward You. Amen.

O Gracious God, on this Veterans' Day we give thanks to those who've shown the way of freedom and justice by giving their all in heeding your eternally triumphant call. Now, as we honor our courageous and brave may we follow Your way that for us You pave. Though our

trials be different, our adventures quite varied, we honor our veterans, who before us You've carried. Though many may see no more of tomorrow they've lived not in vain, nor in tragic sorrow but rather in peace. They've won the real prize to new dawns, with You, their souls do arise. They've defended this land with dignity and pride on the wings of eagles and angels. They ride to be near to You, creator and friend, as examples of life without end. Amen.

O Almighty God and most wonderful Father, today we remember all service members who have served their country with distinction. We recall their courage and strength and dedication. We ask Your protection for those who actively serve You today. Grant eternal life to those who have passed from this world and grant perseverance to those still serving. This we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Dear Father You who were known by the ancients as the Lord of Hosts, we bring You thanks for the host whom we honor today. We thank You, Father, for Your power and for the lives of those which You have empowered in the service of our nation. For all of the men and women who have given of their time, their honor, and even of their lives for the sake of freedom, we offer praise and thanksgiving. It was through their efforts and your grace that we persist in our freedom. We pray today, Father, that we might live to see a time when there will be no need for others to be known as "veterans." We pray for the peace of our nation and of the world. We ask that You be gracious to all of those serving now, wherever they are in this world. We pray Your blessings in their lives as we now honor them and those who went before. May all who have served and who do serve find peace and strength through Your power and their faith. Amen.

Gracious Father, we come into Your presence asking that You bless this worship service in which we seek to pay tribute to our veterans -- past and present -- for their many contributions to the freedom we enjoy today. But Lord, most of all we want to pay tribute to You, our Almighty Father, for we know that it is by Your decree that nations rise and fall. Open our eyes, O Lord, so that no matter how alone we may feel, that like Elisha's servant in the long ago, we may look around us and see that we are surrounded by chariots of fire and an army more powerful than any on the face of the earth. To Your great and holy name we give thanks for the freedom we enjoy - a freedom which allows us to worship You even now. For it is in the name of our Lord that we pray. Amen.

Our God, and God of our ancestors, as we look backward on this Veterans Day, let us recognize the dedication of those men and women who served our Armed Forces before us. Help us to make their sacrifices for freedom our guide in our daily duties. Uphold high the standard of service they set so that we will do our best each day. Amen.

Father, we give thanks to You for the courage and sacrifice of the men and women of the Armed Forces. It has been through their dedication to duty and Your bounty that our country has continued to remain free. As we celebrate this particular day of emphasis in our country we

come to realize that You are the one who has given to us courageous individuals to lead and to serve in our military forces, and for that we are thankful and grateful. Amen.

Eternal God, who has been our sustainer in times past, continue to be our help in these days. On this Veterans' Day, we offer to You our praise and thanksgiving for the blessings of the past, the challenge of the present, and the hope of the future. Make us ever mindful of the sacred trust we have received from the founders of our nation and all those who have helped make this nation great. As we lay this wreath in memory of those who served in our military services. Enable us to rededicate ourselves to the heritage and principles that have made our men and women of the sea services, we offer a special prayer of gratitude for those who have served their nation faithfully in the past and those who constitute the fabric of our military strength today. In this solemn hour, we pause to honor our fallen comrades who laid down their lives in the service of freedom and democracy. We equally remember those who are still listed as unaccounted for prisoners of war/missing in action and their families. Finally, we pray for Your blessing as we join with those in our uniformed service scattered around the world who work toward the end that righteousness and peace shall prevail among all nations. Amen.

I pray this evening, O Lord, not as a political man, but as a pastor and a human being. For I am one of those who came back from Vietnam and now am committed to sharing the proud task of remembering my brothers and sisters who have fallen and who are memorialized in the land of our birth this day. O God, how does one summarize the valor, pain, and eventual disenchantment of a generation of young, well-intentioned Americans, who fought and gave their life-blood to fight a war that has yielded little more than bitter fruit? Was their courage of less valor or their sacrifice less sacred than those who have gone before? On this Veterans Day, O Lord, I pray for our dead and missing in Vietnam -- 56,000 plus souls who went beyond the borders of self-interest and who continue to cry for more than stone-cold recognition. Their memory demands an honest acceptance that a man who follows his convictions from a clear sense of duty and love for his people represents the highest good a nation can offer -- be he friend or foe. Those, O God, were our brightest and best -- marked by the cynical and clever, but ever remembered by You. O God, Vietnam remains, as it should, a matter of moral contention for all Americans. That suffering land has made dust of our innocence and caused us rightly to question our national intent. O Lord, lift the veil on this tragedy. Help us to work through the war -- but never at the cost of refusing our fallen brothers the love and dignity they deserve. Grant us this night an ever peaceful rest. Amen.**

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Almighty God, we praise You, we thank You that you have founded Your church in this world, that Your word is still proclaimed, and that we experience your presence in our midst. Give us courage to fearlessly proclaim our faith and thankfully bear witness to Your love. Keep us walking in the paths of righteousness for your name's sake. Give courage and comfort to those who suffer for the sake of the gospel, many of whom are imprisoned because of their faith.

Strengthen them with the power of Your life-giving word and keep them from weakness and despair. Help us to “pray without ceasing” in times of joy and hardship in order to be instruments of Your peace. In the name of Christ. Amen.

God, we are joining with all Your people to lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving. May this day of united prayer remind us of our “oneness” and our dependence upon each other. Unite us in our quest for peace in the world, and make us aware of Your presence in us that may produce internal calm. As our prayers reach up to Thee like a mighty wind, send Your Spirit among us to forgive our sins; open our eyes to see our neighbor’s need and touch our emotions that we may be moved to share with the needy of the world. May all people be blessed on this day. Amen.

Almighty and eternal God, may Your grace enkindle in all of us a love for the many unfortunate people whom poverty and misery reduce to a condition of life unworthy of human beings. May those who are at peace with one another hold fast to the good will that unites them; may those who are enemies forget their hatred and be healed. Arouse in the hearts of those who call Your Father a hunger and thirst for social justice and for fraternal charity in deeds and in truth. Grant, O Lord, peace in our days, peace to our souls, peace to our families, peace to our country, and peace among nations. Amen.